

Kehillat Yom Tov

High Holy Days

Readings and Songs



TEMPLE SINAI

— WASHINGTON DC —

Kehillat Yom Tov
Rosh Hashanah Readings and Songs

1) Eilecha

אֵלֶיךָ יְיָ אֶקְרָה וְאֶל אֲדֹנָי אֶתְחַנֵּן
שְׁמַע יְיָ וְחַנּוּנִי יְיָ הִיָּה עֲזָר לִי

Ei-le-cha Adonai e-kra v'el Adonai et-cha-nan
Sh'ma Adonai v'cho-nei-ni Adonai he-yeih o-zeir li

To You, Adonai, I call, and to Adonai I plead:
Hear me, Adonai, be gracious to me; Adonai, be my help.
Psalm 30:9, 11/Shlomo Carlebach

2) Esa Einai

אֲשָׂא עֵינַי אֶל־הַהָרִים מֵאֵין יָבוֹא עֲזָרִי
עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְיָ עֲשֵׂה שְׁמִים וְאָרֶץ

E-sa ei-nai el he-ha-rim mei-a-yin ya-vo ez'ri
Ez'ri mei-im Adonai o-seih sha-ma-yim va-a-retz

I lift my eyes to the mountain, from where will my help come?
My help will come from Adonai, maker of heaven and earth.
Psalm 121:1-2/Shlomo Carlebach

3) Candlelighting

The first mitzvah in the Torah is "Let there be light!"
So we are commanded:
in everything you do, be a menorah, a bringer of light.
Live with honor, act with integrity, do your work with passion -
and the radiance of your deeds will live after you.
May our ideals burn bright, forever unextinguished,
and may we live our lives like the flames we kindle -
always stretching upward, striving for the good, reaching for You.

4) Shaar T'filah

This autumn night
the shades of darkness
in the sky
are signs of earth's turning,
the fleeting ways of nature.

And we -
drawn together in this holy house,
filled with New Year's hope and light -
turn our hearts toward You
in prayer,
in worship,
seeking life's essence.

In the presence of Your love
we feel the nearness
of those who bless our lives
even in death.
Precious memories of their love
restore our strength,
renew our faith in life's goodness.

We acknowledge with gratitude
the life You have given us,
the bounty that sustains us,
Your comfort
in sickness and sorrow,
Your compassion
in valleys of despair.

God of years, God of eternity,
bless us now and always.
Bless our homes and our families.
Be with us in our dreams
and in our hopes.
Be with us
through these Days of Awe,
as we search our souls within
and seek the lasting shelter
of Your love.

(Inspired by a hymn for the New Year by Rabbi David Einhorn, 1809-1879)

5) Mi Chamocha

They went forth from Egypt on a single night
but next time the miracle will be different.

Once two Sages were walking very early in the valley
and they saw the light of the morning star.
Said one to the other,
"This is how the redemption will be.
The dawn breaks with a single ray of light
and bit by bit the sky is illumined,
until morning comes and the darkness is gone.
So the redemption will occur little by little,
growing steadily and gradually
until the world is full of light."

Do not wait for a miracle
or the sudden transformation of the world.
Bring the day closer, step by step,
with every act of courage, of kindness,
of healing and repair.
Do not be discouraged by the darkness.
Lift up every spark you can
and watch the horizon
for the coming of dawn.
Look closely!
It has already begun.

(Based on a passage in the Jerusalem Talmud - Brachot 1:1)

6) Hashkiveinu

Hash'kiveinu, Adonai Eloheinu l'shalom
v'ha-amideinu Malkeinu l'chayim,
ufros aleinu sukat sh'lomecha
v'tak'neinu b'eitzah tovah mil'fanecha
v'hoshi-einu l'ma-an sh'mecha.)2X
Ush'mor tzeiteinu uvo-einu
l'chayim ul'shalom mei-atah v'ad olam
ufros aleinu sukat sh'lomecha
Baruch atah Adonai, haporeis sukat shalom
aleinu v'al kol amo Yisrael, v'al Yerushalayim.

7) God, Where Shall I Find You?

God, where shall I find You?
Your place is lofty and secret.
And where shall I not find You?
The whole earth is full of Your glory!

You are found in our innermost hearts,
Yet you fix earth's boundaries.
You are a strong tower for those who are near,
And the trust of those who are far.

I have sought to come near You;
I have called to You with all my heart.
And when I went out towards You,
I found You coming towards me.

The living creatures,
Standing on the summit of the world
Praise Your wonders.
Your throne is above their heads,
Yet it is You who carry them all!

(Yehuda HaLevi - Sephardic physician poet, philosopher, 1075-1141)

8) Tourists

Visits of condolence is all we get from them.
They squat at the Holocaust Memorial,
They put on grave faces at the Wailing Wall
And they laugh behind heavy curtains
In their hotels.
They have their pictures taken
Together with our famous dead
At Rachel's Tomb and Herzl's Tomb
And on Ammunition Hill.
They weep over our sweet boys
And lust after our tough girls
And hang up their underwear
To dry quickly
In cool, blue bathrooms.

Once I sat on the steps by a gate at David's Tower,
I placed my two heavy baskets at my side. A group of tourists

was standing around their guide and I became their target marker. "You see that man with the baskets? Just right of his head there's an arch from the Roman period. Just right of his head." "But he's moving, he's moving!" I said to myself: redemption will come only if their guide tells them, "You see that arch from the Roman period? It's not important: but next to it, left and down a bit, there sits a man who's bought fruit and vegetables for his family."

(Yehuda Amichai, Israeli poet, 1924-2000)

9) Where Can Holiness Be Found

There is holiness when we strive to be true to the best we know.

There is holiness when we are kind to someone who cannot possibly be of service to us.

There is holiness when we promote family harmony.

There is holiness when we forget what divides us and remember what unites us.

There is holiness when we are willing to be laughed at for what we believe in.

There is holiness when we love - truly and honestly and unselfishly.

There is holiness when we remember the lonely and bring cheer into a dark corner.

There is holiness when we share - our bread, our ideas, our enthusiasm.

There is holiness when we gather to pray to Adonai who gave us the power to pray.

Holy, holy, holy is the God of hosts;
All of life can be filled with God's glory.

(Rabbi Sidney Greenberg, 1917-2003)

10) Atah V'chartanu

Atah v'chartanu mikol ha-amim; ahavta otanu, v'ratzita banu.
V'romamtanu mikol hal'shonot, v'kidashtanu b'mitzvotcha.
V'keiravtanu, Malkeinu, la-avodatecha;
v'shimcha hagadol v'hakadosh aleinu karata.
Vatiten-lanu, Adonai Eloheinu, b'ahavah et Yom HaZikaron hazeh,
yom t'ru-ah, mikra kodesh, zeicher litzi-at Mitzrayim.

11) Modim

For the blessings which You lavish upon us in forest and sea, in mountain
and meadow, in rain and sun, we thank You;

Modim anachnu Lach. מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ.

For the blessings You implant within us, joy and peace, meditation and
laughter, we are grateful to You; *Modim anachnu Lach. מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ.*

For the blessings of friendship and love, of family and community;

Modim anachnu Lach. מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ.

For the blessings we recognize and those we fail to recognize;

Modim anachnu Lach. מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ.

For the blessing of our tradition and our holy days;

Modim anachnu Lach. מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ.

For the blessing of return and forgiveness, of memory, of vision and of hope;

Modim anachnu Lach. מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ.

For all these blessings which surround us on every side, O God, hear our
thanks and accept our gratitude. (adapted from Ruth F. Brin, "For the Blessings")

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַטוֹב שְׁמֶךָ וְלָךְ נֶאֱחָה לְהוֹדוֹת.

Baruch atah Adonai, hatov shimcha ul'cha na-eh l'hodot.

Blessed are You, Adonai, Your Name is goodness and
You are worthy of thanksgiving.

12) A Prayer for Those Who Are Ill and for Givers of Care

May the Eternal One who blesses all life,
bless and strengthen all of us
who struggle against illness.

May we whose lives are touched by illness
be blessed with faith, courage, love, and caring.

May we experience the support and sustenance
of family, friends, companions, and community.

May we be granted restful nights and days of comfort.
We pray for *r'fuah sh'leimah* - precious moments of healing -
and a sense of wholeness in body and soul.

May those who care for the sick
with their hands, their voices, and their hearts
be blessed with courage and stamina.

May those who pursue healing
through medical skill and knowledge
be blessed with insight, patience, and compassion.

May all of us,
the sick and the well together,
find courage and hope.

And let us say: *Amen*.

13) The Life of Eternity

The light of life is a finite flame. Like our sacred candles, life is kindled,
it burns, it glows, it is radiant with warmth and beauty. But soon it fades;
its substance is consumed, and it is no more.
In light we see; in light we are seen. The flames dance and our lives are full.
But as night follows day, the candle of our life burns down and gutters.
There is an end to the flames. We see no more and are no more seen.
Yet we do not despair, for we are more than a memory slowly fading into
the darkness. With our lives we give life. Something of us can never die:
we move in the eternal cycle of darkness and death, of light and life.

Kehillat Yom Tov Yom Kippur Readings and Songs

1) Return Again

Return again (2) return to the land of your soul

Return to who you are, return to what you are
Return to where you are born and re-born again.

Sholomo Carlebach

2) Opening the Ark, Opening Ourselves

Yom Kippur: the Jewish people's Festival of the Soul
and *Kol Nidrei* its sacred portal – a night of deep emotions,
a night, as the Psalmist wrote, to "rejoice with trembling."

We rejoice at the sound of *Kol Nidrei* – rhythmic words of release
from vows, oaths, and promises to God we fail to keep.

We tremble at the melody. Music of spiritual amazement,
it fills us with awe as we stand before God and Torah.

We rejoice that we stand together, strengthened by community
in this hour of shared weakness and humility.

We tremble – for tonight we confess our flaws, admit our imperfection,
and acknowledge a Power far beyond our understanding.

We rejoice that we commit ourselves to great endeavors
because we feel so deeply and think so nobly.

We tremble – for we find that our ideals are far greater than our ability;
our promises surpass our might.

We rejoice in the freedom that is *Kol Nidrei's* true gift:
the freedom to begin a new year without fear of failure,
to aspire to be God's image in the world.

We tremble because we are mortal;
we rejoice in our gratitude for life.

We rejoice with trembling, and enter *Kol Nidrei* to face our humanity.

3) Peace in the Night

When fears multiply
and danger threatens;
when sickness comes,
when death confronts us –
it is God's blessing of shalom
that sustains us
and upholds us.
Lightening our burden,
dispelling our worry,
restoring our strength,
renewing our hope –
reviving us.

(Rabbi Herschel Matt, 1922-1987)

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7) Ashamnu

When I was young
And learned the alphabet,
Life was open to me
"A" was full of aspiration
"B" was for beauty; "C" for confidence
And "D" for dreams
And so on through the list – no fewer than twenty-six
opportunities, twenty-six possibilities.
And yet I fear that with the passage of time,
I've squandered them, creating instead
"A"s of apathy, "B"s of brusqueness, and "C"s of coarseness.
Help me, then, to return to that innocence.
Let the letters be letters once again,
And let them rise to the heavens
And form into the words
That you know I wish to say.

8) Vidui

Despite the sins, wrongdoings, and transgressions we have committed, there are times when we have been true to God's message. Although we do not often take the time to remember our accomplishments, good deeds, and joys, their memories can light for us the path of *t'shuva* for the future. Just as we as a congregation recite our sins, we take a moment this evening to recall our good deeds.

9) Ahavnu

We have been open to love: for God, for ourselves, and for others,	A-havnu	אָהַבְנוּ
We have acknowledged God's blessings in our lives,	Bei-rachnu	בֵּירַכְנוּ
We have cultivated the earth, being careful to protect its resources,	Gi-dalnu	גִּדְלְנוּ
We have spoken positively.	Dibarnu yofi.	דִּבַּרְנוּ יָפִי.
We have raised up,	He-elinu	הֶעֱלֵנוּ
We have shown compassion,	V'chasnu	וְחָסְנוּ
We have acted enthusiastically,	Zei-raznu	זֵרְזָנוּ
We have been empathetic,	Cha-malnu	חָמַלְנוּ
We have cultivated truth.	Tipachnu emet.	טִפַּחְנוּ אֱמֶת.
We have given good advice,	Ya-atznu tov	יַעֲצָנוּ טוֹב
We have been respectful of others whose views and values are different than our own,	Ki-badnu	כִּי־בָדְנוּ
We have learned,	La-madnu	לָמַדְנוּ
We have forgiven,	Ma-chalnu	מָחַלְנוּ
We have comforted,	Na-chamnu	נָחַמְנוּ
We have been creative,	Sa-lalnu	סָלַלְנוּ
We have encouraged others,	O-dadnu	עוֹדַדְנוּ
We have found solutions to troubling problems and obstacles,	Pa-tarnu	פָּטַרְנוּ
We have worked to make our world more just,	Tza-daknu	צִדְקָנוּ

We have accepted responsibility when asked to do so and stepped up without being asked.	Kibalnu A-cha-rayut.	קִבַּלְנוּ אֶחָרַיִת.
We have been merciful,	Ri-chamnu	רַחֲמָנוּ
We have given full effort,	Sha-kadnu	שָׁקַדְנוּ
We have supported wise leaders,	Ta-machnu	תַּמְכְּנוּ
We have contributed,	Ta-ramnu	תָּרַמְנוּ
We have mended what was torn.	Ti-kanu.	תִּקְנָנוּ.

(Rabbi Avi Weiss - adapted)

10) Ya'aleh

Let evening bring salvation.
Let morning make all hearts pure.
This day our prayers spell healing – Peace, peace, to all, far and near –
peace . . . till evening comes.
May mindfulness of us rise with the evening star,
our worthy deeds revealed in the radiance of dawn.
All day we meditate on life's beauty – the precious jewels of creation
till evening comes.
Let our pounding on the gates of mercy thunder on high, as darkness falls,
And with dawn, let the joy of renewal arrive.
The day holds the urgency of our prayers – confessions of the heart,
lamentations of the soul
till evening comes.
May our yearnings rise above the shadows of dusk.
May the searching of our souls reach You in the morning.
All day our praise is before You – may it be acceptable, may it be received
till evening comes.

11) Mourner's Kaddish

This is the praise of the living,
praise for the gift of life.

Praise for loved ones and friends,
for listening hearts,
laughter and forgiveness.

Praise for their searching and striving,
for perseverance and vision,
minds that aspired to know and understand.

Praise for their courage and faith,
for souls that brought light to dark corners,
for hands that were gentle and strong.

Praise for those who walked before us
in valley of darkest shadow
who endured their grief, and brought forth new life.

Praise for the One who is always with us:
the Source of growth, the Promise of goodness.

Praise for the gift of life and memory.
Praise for the blessing of hope.