

Who Gives Sight to the Blind

When we thank God for giving sight to the blind, we express thankfulness not only for the literal gift of sight, but also for our capacity for insight, for our ability to be aware of the world around us, and for the capacity to understand ourselves and our world.

Rabbi Benjamin said: We are all blind until the Holy One enlightens our eyes, as the Bible records regarding Hagar, “And God opened her eyes and she saw a well” (Genesis 21:19).

—GENESIS RABBAH

Imitating God

Our prayers thanking God for the clothes we wear and for the ability to stand up and walk about are also a reminder of the imperative for us to provide clothing for the “naked,” to offer help to those who are in physical need, and to defend those who are unjustifiably “bound.” The ancient rabbis commented on the verse, “You shall follow Adonai your God...” (Deuteronomy 13:5)—just as God is kind and loving, so too you should be kind and loving; just as God performs acts of generosity, so should you; just as God is patient, so should you be, as it is written, “You shall make yourselves holy, for I, Adonai your God, am holy” (Leviticus 19:2).

—based on THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

Blessings for a New Day

We rise.

Barukh atah ADONAI, our God, sovereign of time and space, who enables the bird to distinguish day from night, who made me in the divine image, who made me free, who made me a Jew, who gives sight to the blind, who clothes the naked,

**Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
asher natan la-sekhvi vinah l’havḥin bein yom u-vein lailah.**

**Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
she-asani b’tzalmo.**

**Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
she-asani ben/bat ḥorin.**

**Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
she-asani yisrael.**

**Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
pokei-ah ivrim.**

**Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
malbish arumim.**

בְּרִכּוֹת הַשַּׁחַר

We rise.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְשִׁכּוּי בֵּינָה לְהִבָּחֵין בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁעַשְׂנִי בְּצַלְמוֹ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שְׁעַשְׂנִי בְּנוֹבֵת הוֹרֵיין.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁעַשְׂנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, פּוֹקֵחַ עֵוְרִים.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, מְלַבֵּישׁ עֲרֻמִּים.

BLESSINGS FOR A NEW DAY
בְּרִכּוֹת הַשַּׁחַר. As reported in the Babylonian Talmud, most of the *b'rakhot* in this collection were originally recited at home as one went through the daily acts of waking and rising (Berakhot 60b). Each passage extols God as we begin the day: on arising from sleep, on hearing the birds sing, on dressing, on taking one's first steps, and so on. Maimonides stated: "These *b'rakhot* are without a prescribed order; each is to be recited only on the appropriate occasion... and not as part of the synagogue service" (Mishneh Torah,

Hilkhot Tefillah 7:7, 9). Other authorities, however, beginning with the siddur of Rav Amram Gaon in the 9th century, recommended the public recitation of these *b'rakhot*. This has been the standard Ashkenazic practice to this day; the common Sephardic practice is to recite these *b'rakhot* privately and to begin the service with the morning psalms.

BARUKH בְּרוּךְ. Many commentators argue that the word *barukh* is not a passive verb meaning "blessed," but rather an adjective descriptive of God: God is the wellspring of all blessings. (The similar-sounding Hebrew word *b'reikhah* means "pool of water.") Thus the opening words of a *b'rakha* are an acknowledgment that God is the source of all blessings (*Meir ibn Gabbai*).

WHO ENABLES THE BIRD TO DISTINGUISH אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְשִׁכּוּי בֵּינָה. We are a part of the natural world, responding to the morning sunlight as does all of nature. This first blessing attributes understanding to the animal realm and points to humans taking instruction from them.

The language is taken from the Book of Job (38:36), where God responds to Job out of the whirlwind, saying: "Who placed wisdom in the most hidden places? Who gave understanding to the bird? Who is wise enough to describe the heavens?" The word used for bird is *sekhvi*, and the Babylonian Talmud identifies it as a rooster (Rosh Hashanah 26a).

WHO MADE ME IN THE DIVINE IMAGE שְׁעַשְׂנִי בְּצַלְמוֹ. This blessing and the next one ("who made me free") are versions of blessings mentioned in the Tosefta (Berakhot 6:18) and in the Babylonian Talmud (Menahot 43b). They have been emended in Conservative prayer-books on the basis of manuscript fragments, found in the Cairo Genizah.

WHO MADE ME A JEW שְׁעַשְׂנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל. This positive formulation is the wording in the Babylonian Talmud (Menahot 43b).

WHO GIVES SIGHT TO THE BLIND פּוֹקֵחַ עֵוְרִים. Said when opening the eyes. Many of these blessings are taken from the psalmist's descriptions of God's actions: "... sets prisoners free ... restores sight to the blind ... makes those who are bent stand straight ..." (Psalm 146:7-8).

WHO CLOTHES THE NAKED מְלַבֵּישׁ עֲרֻמִּים. God's clothing of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21) was an act of kindness exhibited to these first humans, even as they were exiled from the Garden.

Barukh atah ADONAI, our
God, sovereign of time
and space,
who endows each and
every living thing with
unique capabilities and
purpose,
and creates me in the
divine image;
who grants me free will,
and the ability to exer-
cise it,
and blesses me with the
gift and responsibility of
being a Jew;
who opens my eyes to
the world around and
within me, blessing me
with insight, awareness,
and understanding,
and protects me when I
feel vulnerable,
exposed, or ashamed;
who frees me from all that
limits or confines me,
and restores my dignity
when I feel bent or
broken;
who leads me back to solid
ground when the world
shifts beneath my feet,
and guides me along my
path when I am lost or
confused;
who creates me with
needs, and the where-
withal to meet them,
and strengthens the
people Israel with the
courage to embody our
beliefs;
who crowns the people
Israel with a sense of
mission and purpose,
and renews me each night
when I am weary, that I
may awake to each new
day with strength.

—JAN UHRBACH

who releases the bound,
who straightens those who are bent,
who stretches out the earth over the waters,
who steadies our steps,
who has provided for all my needs,
who strengthens the people Israel with courage,
who crowns the people Israel with glory,
and who gives strength to the weary.

Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, matir asurim.

Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, zokef k'fufim.

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
roka ha-aretz al ha-mayim.*

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
ha-meikhin mitzadei gaver.*

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
she-asah li kol tzorki.*

Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, ozer yisrael bigvurah.

Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, oter yisrael b'tifarah.

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
ha-noten laya-eif ko-ah.*

Barukh atah ADONAI, our God, sovereign of time and space,
who removes sleep from my eyes and slumber from my eyelids.

May it be Your will, our God and God of our ancestors,
that You accustom us to study Your Torah

and cling to Your mitzvot;

do not lead us into error, or transgression, or sin,
nor subject us to trials or disgrace.

Do not let the inclination to evil control us,
and distance us from people who would do us evil
and from friends who commit evil;

spur in us the yearning to do good and to act with goodness.

Bend our will and our desires to Your service.

► Today and every day, may You look upon us, and may all who
see us look upon us, with eyes filled with kindness, love,
and compassion. Act toward us with kindly love.

Barukh atah ADONAI, who acts with kindly love to the
people Israel.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, זוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 רוֹקֵעַ הָאָרֶץ עַל הַמַּיִם.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 הַמְּכִיֵּן מִצְעָדֵי גִבּוֹר.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 שֶׁעָשָׂה לִי כָּל-צָרָפִי.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 אוֹזֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגִבּוֹרָה.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 עוֹטֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתַפְאָרָה.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 הַנּוֹתֵן לַיַּעַף כֹּחַ.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 הַמַּעֲבִיר שָׁנָה מֵעֵינֵי וְתַנּוּמָה מֵעַפְעָפִי.
 וַיְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
 [וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ], שֶׁתִּרְגְּלֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתְךָ, וְדַבְּקֵנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ,
 וְאַל תִּבְיָאֵנוּ לֹא לַיַּדִּי חָטָא, וְלֹא לַיַּדִּי עֲבָרָה וְעוֹן, וְלֹא
 לַיַּדִּי נִסְיוֹן, וְלֹא לַיַּדִּי בְּזִיוֹן, וְאַל תִּשְׁלַטְּבֵנוּ יֵצֵר הָרָע,
 וְהִרְחִיקֵנוּ מֵאָדָם רָע וּמִחֵבֵר רָע. וְדַבְּקֵנוּ בְּיֵצֵר הַטוֹב
 וּבְמַעֲשֵׂים טוֹבִים, וְכוּף אֶת-יִצְרָנוּ לְהִשְׁתַּעֲבֹד-לָךְ.
 ◀ וְתַנְּנוּ הַיּוֹם, וּבְכָל-יּוֹם, לַחֵן וּלְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים בְּעֵינֶיךָ,
 וּבְעֵינֵי כָּל-רוֹאֵינוּ, וְתַגְּמַלְנוּ חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

WHO RELEASES THE BOUND
 WHO RELEASES THE BOUND
 מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים. Releasing the
 fetters of wickedness, free-
 ing the oppressed, feeding
 the hungry, and providing
 for the homeless are men-
 tioned by the prophet Isa-
 iah as acts that God desires
 of human beings (58:6).

WHO STRAIGHTENS THOSE
 WHO ARE BENT זוֹקֵף
 WHO ARE BENT זוֹקֵף
 כְּפוּפִים. Literally, “making
 those who are bowed down
 stand upright.” This phrase,
 as found in Psalm 146:8,
 is the biblical warrant for
 standing up straight when
 God’s name is pronounced,
 after having bowed at the
 beginning of a blessing.

WHO STRETCHES OUT THE
 EARTH OVER THE WATERS
 EARTH OVER THE WATERS
 רוֹקֵעַ הָאָרֶץ עַל הַמַּיִם
 Psalms
 136:6. Genesis depicts dry
 land being formed from
 the splitting of the primal
 waters.

MAY IT BE YOUR WILL וַיְהִי
 MAY IT BE YOUR WILL וַיְהִי
 רָצוֹן. A prayer recorded in
 the Babylonian Talmud
 (Berakhot 60b).

TRIALS נִסְיוֹן. The trials of
 TRIALS נִסְיוֹן. The trials of
 life are many: confronting
 personal illness or tragic
 situations, difficult ethical
 dilemmas, temptations that
 may endanger us. In addi-
 tion, because faith is often
 accompanied by doubt,
 and even the strongest
 faith may be vulnerable in
 trying times, we hope that
 today will affirm rather
 than challenge our faith.

INCLINATION TO EVIL יֵצֵר
 INCLINATION TO EVIL יֵצֵר
 הָרָע. The ancient rabbis

believed that we are subject to impulses that lead us to do good or evil. For instance, competitiveness can spur us to exert greater energy but it can also lead to hurtful behavior. The yearning for fame and the approbation of others can influence us to perform acts of kindness and to exercise leadership roles, but it can also produce egos that are never satisfied. We yearn to do good, but we are often impeded by our jealousies, our self-concern, and our desire for mastery and conquest.

*Psalm 150: An
Interpretive Translation*

Praise God in the depths
of the universe;
praise God in the human
heart.
Praise God's power and
beauty,
for God's all-feeling,
fathomless love.
Praise God with drums and
trumpets,
with string quartets and
guitars.
Praise God in market and
workplace,
with computer, with ham-
mer and nails.
Praise God in bedroom
and kitchen;
praise God with pots and
pans.
Praise God in the temple
of the present;
let every breath be God's
praise.

—STEPHEN MITCHELL

HALLELUYAH! Praise God.
Praise God in the sanctuary.
Praise God in the heavens, the seat of God's power.
Praise God at the triumph of the Divine.
Praise God in accord with the greatness of God.
Praise God with the call of the shofar.
Praise God with the harp and the lyre.
Praise God with timbrel and dance.
Praise God with flute and strings.
Praise God with crashing cymbals.
Praise God with rousing cymbals.
► Let every breath be praise of God;
halleluyah, praise God.
Let every breath be praise of God;
praise God, *halleluyah!*
Hal'luyah.
Hal'lu El b'kodsho, hal'luhu birkia uzo.
Hal'luhu vi-g'vurotav, hal'luhu k'rov gudlo.
Hal'luhu b'teika shofar, hal'luhu b'nevel v'khinor.
Hal'luhu b'tof u-mahol, hal'luhu b'minim v'ugav.
Hal'luhu v'tziltz'lei shama, hal'luhu b'tziltz'lei t'ruah.
Kol ha-n'shamah t'hallel yah, hal'luyah.
Kol ha-n'shamah t'hallel yah, hal'luyah.

Psalm 150

CONCLUSION OF THE SELECTION OF PSALMS

Bless ADONAI, always, amen and amen.
From Zion, bless ADONAI who dwells in Jerusalem;
praise God, *halleluyah*.
Bless ADONAI, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.
► Blessed be God's glorious name, always;
and may God's glory encompass the entire world.
Amen and amen.

Some congregations continue with Nishmat, page 145.

הַלְלוּיָהּ,
הַלְלוּ אֵל בְּקֹדֶשׁוֹ, הַלְלוּהוּ בְּרִקְיעַ עֲזוֹ.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּגִבּוֹרֹתָיו, הַלְלוּהוּ כְּרֹב גְּדֻלוֹ.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתַקְעַ שׁוֹפָר, הַלְלוּהוּ בְּנִבְל וְכִנּוֹר.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתוֹף וּמַחּוֹל, הַלְלוּהוּ בְּמִנִּים וְעִגְב.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצְלֵי שְׁמַע, הַלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצְלֵי תְרוּעָה.
◀ כָּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְהַלֵּל יְהוָה, הַלְלוּיָהּ.
כָּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְהַלֵּל יְהוָה, הַלְלוּיָהּ.

תהלים קג

בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם, אָמֵן וְאָמֵן.
בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן, שְׁכֵן יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, הַלְלוּיָהּ.
בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, עֲשֵׂה נִפְלְאוֹת לְבָדוֹ.
◀ וּבְרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹדוֹ לְעוֹלָם,
וַיִּמְלֵא כְבוֹדוֹ אֶת־כָּל הָאָרֶץ,
אָמֵן וְאָמֵן.

Some congregations continue with נְשַׁמַּת, page 145.

PSALM 150. This psalm brings the Book of Psalms to an exultant close. The Book of Psalms begins with the praise of the single righteous individual, “Blessed is the one who does not walk in the way of the wicked” (Psalm 1:1), and concludes with every living being praising God.

BLESS ADONAI, ALWAYS בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם. The Book of Psalms is composed of five smaller “books”; each of the first four conclude with a blessing. Two of those blessings, Psalms 89:53 and 72:18–19, are quoted here, to conclude the morning recitation of the Davidic psalms. Between these two, another verse (Psalm 135:21) is added, specifying that Adonai is the God of Israel—much like a letter’s address on an envelope. The selected verses all begin with the word *barukh*, “blessed.”

Thus, just as we began P’sukei D’zimra with a mul-

multiple repetition of “blessed” in Barukh She-amar (page 122), so too, here, we repeat that word with multiple verses. The oldest versions of P’sukei D’zimra ended here, and so the opening and closing verses of this paragraph form a conclusion by repeating the affirmative response, “Amen.”

*The Blessings of the
Priests before the Sh'ma*

The priests in the Temple would say the following *b'rakhah* before the Sh'ma: "May the one who dwells in this House always grant you love, harmony, peace, and friendship."

—TALMUD OF THE LAND
OF ISRAEL

*You Have Loved
Us Deeply*

With a great love (*ahavah rabah*) You have loved us (*ahavtanu*). The love of God for the people Israel is declared here just before the Sh'ma. It prepares us for the Sh'ma. Now you might expect a listing of gifts to us—God's freeing us, feeding us, delivering us. Instead, we thank God for one gift: God's teaching, God's opening our minds and hearts to Torah.

What You've given us is the ability to listen to You, so we can thank and draw close to You. Your compassion is expressed in teaching our hearts to know compassion, to love You, giving us not personal freedoms but, in fact, boundaries bringing us close to the Unbounded, the One. By giving us Torah, You've shown us how to live. We can now offer thanks and say: "Hear O Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is one."

—JOHN J. CLAYTON

Second B'rakhah before the Sh'ma: God's Great Love

You have loved us deeply, ADONAI our God, and showered us with boundless compassion. *Avinu Malkeinu*, for the sake of our ancestors who trusted in You and to whom You taught the laws of life, so may You be gracious to us and instruct us. Kind creator, have compassion for us, open our hearts so that we may understand and, with love, discern, hear and study, observe, perform, and fulfill all the teachings of Your Torah with love. Enlighten our eyes with Your Torah; attach our hearts to Your mitzvot; unify our hearts to love and revere Your name so that we never lose hope. As we trust in Your great, holy, awe-inspiring name, we will delight and rejoice in Your deliverance.

Some gather their tzitzit before reciting this line:

► Bring us safely from the four corners of the earth, and lead us in dignity to our land, for You are the God who effects deliverance. You have chosen us from all other tongues and peoples, always drawing us nearer to Your name, that we may truly acknowledge You and lovingly proclaim Your oneness. *Barukh atah ADONAI*, who lovingly cares for the people Israel.

**Ahavah rabah ahavtanu Adonai eloheinu,
hemlah g'dolah viteirah hamalta aleinu.**

**Avinu malkeinu, ba-avur avoteinu [v'imoteinu] she-bathu v'kha
va-t'lamdeim hukei hayim, ken t'honeinu u-t'lamdeinu.**

**Avinu ha-av ha-rahaman, ha-m'raheim, raheim aleinu, v'ten b'libeinu
l'havin u-l'haskil lishmo-a lilmod u-l'lamed lishmor v'la-asot u-l'kayem
et kol divrei talmud toratekha b'ahavah.**

**V'ha-eir eineinu b'toratekha, v'dabeik libeinu b'mitzvotekha
v'yaqed l'vaveinu l'ahavah u-l'yirah et sh'mekha, v'lo neivosh l'olam va-ed.
Ki v'shem kodsh'kha ha-gadol v'hanora batahnu,
nagilah v'nism'had bishuatekha.**

Some gather their tzitzit before reciting this line:

► **Va-havi-einu l'shalom mei-arba kanfot ha-aretz,
v'tolikheinu kom'miyut l'artzeinu,
ki el po-el y'shu-ot atah,
u-vanu vaharta mikol am v'lashon,
v'keiravtanu l'shimkha ha-gadol selah be-emet,
l'hodot l'kha u-l'yaqedkha b'ahavah.**

Barukh atah adonai, ha-boher b'amo yisrael b'ahavah.

אַהֲבָה רַבָּה אֶהְבֵּתֵנוּ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
 חֲמֵלָה גְדוֹלָה וַיִּתְּרָה חֲמֵלָתְ עָלֵינוּ.
 אֲבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֵינוּ, בְּעֵבוֹר אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ]
 שִׁפְטָחוּ בָךְ וַתִּלְמַדְם חֻקֵי חַיִּים,
 בֵּן תַּחֲנֵנוּ וַתִּלְמַדְנוּ.
 אֲבִינוּ, הָאֵב הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הַמְּרַחֵם,
 רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ וְתֵן בְּלִבֵּנוּ לְהִבִּין וּלְהַשְׁכִּיל,
 לְשָׁמֵעַ, לְלַמֵּד וּלְלַמֵּד, לְשָׁמֵר וּלְעֲשׂוֹת
 וּלְקַיֵּם אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי תִלְמוּד תּוֹרָתְךָ בְּאַהֲבָה.

וְהָאֵר עֵינֵינוּ בְּתוֹרָתְךָ,
 וְדַבֵּק לִבֵּנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ,
 וַיַּחַד לְבַבֵּנוּ לְאַהֲבָה וּלְיִרְאָה אֶת־שִׁמְךָ,
 וְלֹא נִבּוֹשׁ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
 כִּי בְשֵׁם קִדְשְׁךָ הַגְּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא בְּטַחֲנוּ,
 נִגְיְלָה וְנִשְׁמַחָה בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ.

Some gather their tzitzit before reciting this line:

◀ וְהִבִּיאֵנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם מֵאַרְבַּע כַּנְּפוֹת הָאָרֶץ,
 וְתוֹלִיכֵנוּ קוֹמְמִיּוֹת לְאַרְצֵנוּ,
 כִּי אֵל פּוֹעֵל יִשׁוּעוֹת אֲתָהּ,
 וּבָנוּ בְּחֵרֶת מְפַלְעִים וּלְשׁוֹן,
 וְקִרְבָּתֵנוּ לְשִׁמְךָ הַגְּדוֹל סְלָה בְּאַמֶּת,
 לְהוֹדוֹת לָךְ וּלְיַחְדְּךָ בְּאַהֲבָה.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַבּוֹחֵר בְּעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאַהֲבָה.

YOU HAVE LOVED US DEEPLY אַהֲבָה רַבָּה. The Hebrew root *alef-hei-vet*, meaning “love,” appears six times in this passage (both as the noun and a verb). Reuven Hammer points out that three of them speak of our love for God and three speak of God’s love for us. While reciting this *b'rakhah*, the worshipper can anticipate the seventh occurrence, which is found in the first paragraph of the Sh'ma: “You shall love Adonai your God.”

AVINU MALKEINU אֲבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֵינוּ. Literally, “our father, our king.” The pairing of the two words emphasizes that God is at once both intimate as a close relation and distant as a monarch. The word *av*, “father,” suggests the image of God as source or progenitor, and therefore it may also be translated as “creator.”

LAWS OF LIFE חֻקֵי חַיִּים. The word “Torah” encompasses many different meanings. In its most limited usage, it refers to the Five Books of Moses. But in a larger sense it refers to all of Scripture, and even to all of later Jewish teaching. Thus, the rabbis of the Talmud spoke

of the “Written Torah” and the “Oral Torah,” the latter referring to the teachings of the Midrash, Mishnah, and Talmud—and even to “whatever new teaching a student of wisdom might impart until the end of time” (Leviticus Rabbah 22:1). In this prayer, “Torah” embraces the widest meaning: the laws of life—all those teachings that instruct us concerning a full ethical and religious life.

TO UNDERSTAND AND DISCERN . . . OBSERVE, FULFILL, AND PERFORM לְהִבִּין וּלְהַשְׁכִּיל . . . לְשָׁמֵר וּלְעֲשׂוֹת וּלְקַיֵּם. This sequence implies that study is intimately linked with action—indeed, that study should lead to action.

GATHERING THE TZITZIT. Many observe the custom, originating in the late Middle Ages, of gathering the four *tzitziyot* (plural of *tzitzit*) of the *tallit* while reciting the words “bring us safely from the four corners of the earth,” thus symbolizing Israel’s unity and ingathering. The *tzitziyot* are then held through the third paragraph of the Sh'ma, and kissed when reciting the word *tzitzit* (which appears three times in that paragraph). By this practice, we indicate that we are lovingly undertaking to observe these words of Torah, and we hope that our commitment to strive for holiness will lead to greater unity. We are also gathering within us all our positive intentions.

Hear, O Israel

The core of our worship is not a prayer at all, but a cry to our fellow Jews and fellow humans. In it we declare that God is one—which is also to say that humanity is one, that life is one, that joys and sufferings are all one—for God is the force that binds them all together. There is nothing obvious about this truth, for life as we experience it seems infinitely fragmented. Human beings seem isolated from one another, divided by all the fears and hatreds that make up human history. Even within a single life, one moment feels cut off from the next, memories of joy and fullness offering us little consolation when we are depressed or lonely. To assert that all is one in God is our supreme act of faith. No wonder that the Sh'ma, the first “prayer” we learn in childhood, is also the last thing we are to say before we die.

—ARTHUR GREEN

The Challenge of Faith

The Israeli poet Yoram Nissonovitch remarks that religious questions may not constitute the subversion of our faith; rather, it may help us get past tired notions that narrow our vision, and it may open our souls to new and deeper understandings. And his colleague Elhanan Nir adds: Doubts lead to a strong, surprising, and deep faith that cannot be compared with classical faith. This is a faith for which nothing is taken for granted.

Recitation of the Sh'ma

Some people may wish to pause here for a moment. Some may close their eyes; others may place a hand over their eyes. The intention is to concentrate on God's oneness.

*The following words are added in the absence of a minyan:
God is a faithful sovereign.*

Hear, O Israel, ADONAI is our God, ADONAI is one.

Sh'ma yisrael, Adonai eloheinu Adonai ehad.

Recited quietly: Praised be the name of the one whose glorious sovereignty is forever and ever.

You shall love ADONAI your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, and with all that is yours.

These words that I command you this day
shall be taken to heart.

Teach them again and again to your children;
speak of them when you sit in your home,
when you walk on your way,
when you lie down,
and when you rise up.

Bind them as a sign upon your hand
and as a symbol above your eyes;
inscribe them upon the doorposts of your home
and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 6:4–9

*V'ahavta et Adonai elohekha b'khol l'vav'kha u-v'khol nafsh'kha
u-v'khol me'odekha. V'hayu ha-d'varim ha-eileh asher anokhi m'tzav'kha
ha-yom al l'vavekha. V'shinantam l'vanekha v'dibarta bam, b'shivt'kha
b'veitekha u-v'lekht'kha va-derekh u-v'shokhb'kha u-v'kumekha.
U-k'shartam l'ot al yadekha v'hayu l'totafot bein einekha.
U-kh'tavtam al m'zuzot beitekha u-visharekha.*

קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע

Some people may wish to pause here for a moment. Some may close their eyes; others may place a hand over their eyes. The intention is to concentrate on God's oneness.

In the absence of a minyan, we add the following: אֵל מֶלֶךְ נֶאֱמָן.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד.

Recited quietly: בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלֻכוֹתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

וְאֶהְבֶּתְךָ אֵת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ
וּבְכָל-מְאֹדֶךָ: וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ
הַיּוֹם עַל-לִבְבְּךָ: וְשָׁנַנְתָּם לְבִנְיָיִךָ וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשַׁבְּתֶךָ
בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתֹּתֶךָ בְּדַרְךָ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמֶךָ:
וּקְשַׁרְתָּם לְאָזְנוֹת עַל-יְדֶיךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ:
וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל-מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

דברים ו:ד-ט

THE RECITATION OF THE SH'MA. Rabbinic literature refers to the Sh'ma as a *k'riah*, a reading aloud of a passage of the Torah. Later it became a meditation as well, a way to focus on God's "oneness"—so much so that for some it became a moment to experience a mystical union with God. The Babylonian Talmud reports: Rabbi Judah the Prince was teaching and needed to stop, since the hour for reciting the Sh'ma was passing, so he covered his eyes for a moment and then continued teaching (Berakhot 13b). In this story, reciting the Sh'ma was but a momentary interruption. Later, Rabbi Judah's act of

covering his eyes came to be seen as a sign of deep contemplation, and so it became the custom of many to cover the eyes while reciting the Sh'ma, as a moment to meditate on God's unity.

GOD IS A FAITHFUL SOVEREIGN אֵל מֶלֶךְ נֶאֱמָן. These words form an acronym of *amen*. When we recite the Sh'ma with a *minyan*, the leader concludes with the words *Adonai eloheikhem emet*, "Your God truly"; when, in the absence of a *minyan*, that affirmation is not recited, we add this private affirmation at the beginning of the Sh'ma. The Kabbalists noted that the Sh'ma contained 245 words and so, by adding three additional words, we reach 248—the number of limbs in the body, according to the belief of the ancient rabbis. Thus we affirm, whether by adding words at the beginning or the end of the Sh'ma, that our entire being is dedicated to God.

SH'MA YISRAEL יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁמַע. To whom are these words addressed? Certainly, we are speaking to ourselves, enjoining ourselves to truly hear what our lips are saying. We may also be speaking to each other—the collective people Israel—reminding each other that we are a people united by values, nurturing our own sense of peoplehood. A moving midrash imagines these words recited by Jacob's sons, addressed to their father Jacob/Israel, reassuring him on his deathbed that they remain true to his teachings, and that the God of Jacob is and will remain "their God" (Genesis Rabbah 98:3). And so, we too may be speaking to our forebears, reassuring our ancestors (all the way back to Jacob!) that their legacy continues in us.

ONE אֶחָד. The Hebrew word *ehad*, "one," has been variously interpreted. It can mean that God is totally unified and not made up of parts, as is the case with everything else we encounter in the universe. It can mean unique, that God is different from all else we encounter. It can mean "only," that there is no other being who is divine. Mystics interpret it as meaning that God is one with the universe—or in another formulation, present throughout the universe.

PRaised BE THE NAME שְׁמַע בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם. This phrase is not part of the biblical text but was the customary response of those assembled to hearing the name of God as part of priestly prayers in the Temple. To differentiate it from the actual biblical text, it is recited silently. In the legend mentioned above, this sentence constituted Jacob's response to his children's affirmation, and so it is voiced differently.

INSCRIBE THEM UPON THE DOORPOSTS וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל מְזוֹזוֹת. The observant Jew lives a life surrounded by the Sh'ma: reciting it in the morning upon arising and at night before going to sleep, walking past its inscription on the *mezuzah* when entering one's home, and even adorning oneself with the words on weekday mornings upon one's head and near one's heart when putting on *t'fillin*, phylacteries.

Some omit:

But, ADONAI our God, You have not given it to the nations of the world,
nor, our Sovereign, have You bestowed it on idol worshippers,
nor do the uncircumcised find rest on this day, for

With love, You have given Shabbat to the people Israel, the descendants of
Jacob, whom You have chosen. The people who sanctify the seventh day shall
feel fulfilled and shall delight in Your goodness, for You Yourself were pleased
with the seventh day and sanctified it, calling it the most beloved of days,
a symbol of the work of creation.

Our God and God of our ancestors, embrace our rest.

Make us holy through Your mitzvot and let the Torah be our portion.

Fill our lives with Your goodness and gladden us with Your deliverance.

Purify our hearts to serve You truly.

ADONAI our God, lovingly and willingly grant that we inherit Your holy Shabbat,
that the people Israel, who make Your name holy, may find rest on this day.

*Kad'sheinu b'mitzvotekha v'ten ḥelkeinu b'toratekha,
sabeinu mi-tuvekha v'samḥeinu bishuatekha,
v'taheir libeinu l'ovd'kha be-emet,
v'hanḥileinu Adonai eloheinu b'ahavah u-v'ratzon shabbat kodshekha,
v'yanuḥu vah yisrael m'kad'shei sh'mekha.*

Barukh atah ADONAI, who makes Shabbat holy.

Fifth B'rakhah: The Restoration of Zion

ADONAI our God, embrace Your people Israel and their prayer. Restore
worship to Your sanctuary. May the prayers of the people Israel be lovingly
accepted by You, and may our service always be pleasing.

On Rosh Ḥodesh and Ḥol Ha-mo-ed we add:

Our God and God of our ancestors, may the thought of us rise up and reach You.
Attend to us and accept us; hear us and respond to us. Keep us in mind, and keep in
mind the thought of our ancestors, as well as the Messiah, the descendant of David;
Jerusalem, Your holy city; and all Your people, the house of Israel. Respond to us with
deliverance, goodness, compassion, love, life, and peace, on this

<i>On Rosh Ḥodesh:</i>	<i>On Pesah:</i>	<i>On Sukkot:</i>
Rosh Ḥodesh.	Festival of Matzot.	Festival of Sukkot.

Remember us for good;
respond to us with blessing;
redeem us with life.

Show us compassion and care with words of kindness and deliverance;
have mercy on us and redeem us. Our eyes are turned to You,
for You are a compassionate and caring sovereign.

Some omit:

וְלֹא נִתְּנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְגוֹיֵי הָאָרְצוֹת,
וְלֹא הִנְחַלְתֶּם מַלְכֵנוּ לְעוֹבְדֵי פְסִילִים,
וְגַם בְּמִנוּחַתוֹ לֹא יִשְׁכְּנוּ עֲרָלִים,

כִּי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ נִתְּנוּ בְּאַהֲבָה, לְזֶרַע יַעֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר בָּם
בְּחַרְתָּ. עִם מְקַדְּשֵׁי שְׁבִיעֵי, כָּלֵם יִשְׁפְּעוּ וְיִתְעַנְּנוּ מִטּוֹבָה,
וְהַשְּׁבִיעֵי רָצִיתָ בּוֹ וְקִדְּשָׁתוּ, חֲמִדַּת יָמִים אוֹתוֹ קִרְאתָ,
זָכַר לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ], רְצֵה בְּמִנוּחַתֵּנוּ,
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ, וְתֵן חֶלְקֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתֶךָ,
שִׁפְעֵנוּ מִטּוֹבָה, וְשִׁמְחֵנוּ בִישׁוּעָתֶךָ,
וְטַהַר לִבֵּנוּ לְעִבְדֶּךָ בְּאֵמֶת,
וְהִנְחִילֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרִצּוֹן שַׁבַּת קִדְּשֶׁךָ,
וְיִנוּחוּ בָּהּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְקַדְּשֵׁי שְׁמֶךָ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת.

רְצֵה, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּעִמָּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבִתְפִלָּתָם,
וְהִשֵּׁב אֶת־הָעֲבוּדָה לְדַבִּיר בֵּיתֶךָ,
וּתְפַלְתֶּם בְּאַהֲבָה תִּקְבַּל בְּרִצּוֹן,
וּתְהִי לְרִצּוֹן תָּמִיד עֲבוּדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ.

On Rosh Hodesh and Hol Ha-mo-ed we add:

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ], יַעֲלֶה וְיָבֵא, וְיַגִּיעַ וְיִרְאֶה,
וְיִרְצֵה וְיִשְׁמַע, וְיִפְקֹד וְיִזְכֹּר זְכוֹרֵנוּ וּפְקֻדוֹנֵנוּ, וְזָכְרוֹן
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ], וְזָכְרוֹן מְשִׁיחַ בְּיָדוֹ עֲבָדָה, וְזָכְרוֹן
יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קִדְּשֶׁךָ, וְזָכְרוֹן כָּל־עִמָּךְ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנֶיךָ,
לְפִלִּיטָה, לְטוֹבָה, לְחַן וּלְחַסֵּד וּלְרַחֲמִים, לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם, בְּיוֹם

On Sukkot:

On Pesah:

On Rosh Hodesh:

רֵאשׁ הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה. חַג הַמִּצּוֹת הַזֶּה. חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת הַזֶּה.

זְכַרְנוּ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בּוֹ לְטוֹבָה,

וּפְקֻדְנוּ בּוֹ לְבִרְכָה,

וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ בּוֹ לְחַיִּים.

וּבְדַבַּר יִשׁוּעָה וְרַחֲמִים, חוּס וְחַנּוּן, וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ,

כִּי אֵלֶיךָ עֵינֵינוּ, כִּי אֵל מֶלֶךְ חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה.

BUT . . . YOU HAVE NOT

GIVEN IT וְלֹא נִתְּנוּ. These phrases and the sentences that follow do not appear in early Ashkenazic liturgy. They were probably added in the High Middle Ages, due to the competition between Judaism and Christianity and the persecution in the time of the Crusades and after. A sharp distinction was thus drawn: we are the inheritors of God's wonderful gift, Shabbat, but our persecutors do not participate with us in this special moment. Our situation today is quite different, and we welcome non-Jews to join with us in celebrating Shabbat. As the prophet Isaiah declared, Judaism's gifts are not a secret treasure to be hoarded, but a divine blessing to be shared with all who would join in receiving them.

TO YOUR SANCTUARY לְדַבִּיר בֵּיתֶךָ. Literally, the "inner-chamber," as in 1 Kings 6:19, "within the Temple, on the inside." We pray for access to the innermost reaches of the divine realm; for the most intimate relationship with God. Yet this intimacy is not silence. The word *d'vir* connects to *davar*, "word." In the *d'vir*, God hears our voice, and we hear that of the Divine. (Jill Jacobs)

MAY THE THOUGHT OF US RISE UP AND REACH YOU יַעֲלֶה וְיָבֵא. This paragraph, recited on every festival and New Moon, asks God—and by implication, us—to see the New Moon or the festival as a time to focus on renewal and redemption.

Hallel

Hallel is recited while standing. The leader recites the following b'rakhah, which is then repeated by the congregation:

Barukh atah ADONAI, our God, sovereign of time and space, who has provided us with a path to holiness through the observance of mitzvot and instructed us to recite the psalms of joyful praise, the Hallel.

*Barukh atah adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu likro et ha-hallel.*

HALLELUYAH—joyfully praise God!

Celebrate, O faithful servants of ADONAI; celebrate ADONAI's name.

May the name of ADONAI be blessed, now and forever.

From the east, where the sun rises, to where the sun sets,
may the name of ADONAI be acclaimed.

High above every nation is ADONAI, beyond the heavens is God's glory.

Who is like ADONAI our God?—enthroned on high,
stooping down to look upon earth and sky,

▶ raising the poor from the dust,

m'kimi mei-afar dal

the impoverished from the dung heap,

seating them with nobles, the nobility of God's people,

installing the barren woman of the house as a joyful mother of children.

Halleluyah—joyfully praise God!

Psalm 113

WHEN THE PEOPLE Israel came out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a foreign nation, Judah became God's holy place, the people Israel became God's dominion.

*Seeing them, the sea took flight, the Jordan flowed backward;
mountains pranced like rams, hills like new-born lambs.*

▶ O sea, why run away? Jordan, why flow backward?

Mountains, why prance like rams? Hills, why dance like lambs?

*Earth, shake before your Master's presence, tremble before the God of Jacob,
who turns mountain peaks to pools, flint to fountains.*

*B'tzeit yisrael mi-mitzrayim, beit yaakov mei-am lo-eiz. Haitah yehudah l'kodsho,
yisrael mamsh'lotav. Hayam ra-ah va-yanos, ha-yarden yisov l'aḥor. He-harim rakdu kh'eilim,
g'va-ot kivnei tzon.*

▶ Mah l'kha hayam ki tanus, ha-yarden tisov l'aḥor. He-harim tirk'du kh'eilim, g'va-ot kivnei tzon.

*Mi-lifnei adon ḥuli aretz, mi-lifnei elo-ah yaakov, hahof-khi ha-tzur agam mayim, ḥalamish
l'maino mayim.*

Psalm 114

סדר הלל

Hallel is recited while standing. The leader recites the following b'rakhah, which is then repeated by the congregation:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְקַרְאֵתְךָ הַלֵּל.

הַלְלוּיָהּ.

הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יְהוָה, הַלְלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם יְהוָה.
יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבֹרָךְ, מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.
מִמְזֶרֶח שָׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבוֹאוֹ, מִהַלֵּל שֵׁם יְהוָה.
רַם עַל כָּל־גּוֹיִם יְהוָה, עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ.
מִי כִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, הַמְגַבִּיחַ לְשַׁבָּת.
הַמְשַׁפִּילֵי לְרָאוֹת, בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ.
◀ מְקִימֵי מַעְפָּר דָּל, מְאַשְׁפֹּת יָרִים אֲבִיוֹן.
לְהוֹשִׁיבֵי עִם נְדִיבִים, עִם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ.
מוֹשִׁיבֵי עֵקֶרֶת הַבַּיִת, אִם הַבְּנִיִּים שְׂמִיחָה. הַלְלוּיָהּ.

תהלים קיג

בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם, בַּיַּת יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לַעֲזוֹ.
הִיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקָדְשׁוֹ, יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְשָׁלוֹתָיו.
הַיִּם רָאָה וַיִּגַּם, הַיַּרְדֵּן יָסַב לְאַחֹר.
הַהָרִים רָקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים, גְּבַעוֹת כְּבָנֵי צֶאֱן.
◀ מַה לָּךְ הַיִּם כִּי תִגַּם, הַיַּרְדֵּן תִּסַּב לְאַחֹר.
הַהָרִים תִּרְקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים, גְּבַעוֹת כְּבָנֵי צֶאֱן.
מִלִּפְנֵי אֲדוֹן חוֹלֵי אָרֶץ, מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב.
הַהִפְכֵי הַצּוֹר אַגָּם מַיִם, חֲלַמֵּי־שׁ לְמַעַיְנו מַיִם.

תהלים קיד

HALLEL, comprising Psalms 113–118, is a collection of psalms of celebration recited on joyous occasions: Rosh Hodesh, Pesah, Shavuot, Sukkot, Hanukkah, and Yom HaAtzmaut. It is also included in the Pesah seder, where it is divided into two parts that surround the meal. The connection to Pesah is not incidental. In addition to the reference to the exodus in Psalm 114 (“When Israel came out of Egypt...”), the elevation of the oppressed and lowly to a place of honor is a recurring theme in Hallel and is the focus of Hallel’s opening, Psalm 113. Communal themes continue in Psalm 114 and 115, and then switch in Psalm 116, which speaks of personal suffering and healing: the author appears to be recovering from a terrible illness. By using the theme of the exodus as a metaphor for all celebratory moments, Hallel extends the notion of redemption to include both moments of leaving behind oppression and also moments of overcoming personal or communal tragedy or psychological dejection—and thus of entering into a world of freedom and renewal.

PSALM 113 praises God as caring for the downtrodden. The midrash takes it as a psalm recited in Egypt on the night of the plague of the killing of the firstborn. It was, said the ancient rabbis, the first instance since creation in which anyone had praised God. Who did so? The long-enslaved Israelites praised God when they ceased being slaves to Pharaoh and became servants of God. (*Reuven Hammer, based on Midrash Psalms*)

CELEBRATE הַלְלוּ. The Hebrew word implies something akin to the praise offered an honoree or host at a festivity.

PSALM 114. Here, all of creation participates in the exodus from Egypt. The miraculous events attached to the exodus and the march in the desert are seen as cosmically reflecting God’s relation to the people Israel.

A FOREIGN NATION לַעֲזוֹ מֵעַם. Literally, “a people speaking a foreign tongue.”

*The following paragraph is omitted on Rosh Hodesh
and the last six days of Pesah.*

NOT TO US ADONAI, not to us, but to Your own name give glory,
that You may be known as faithful and kind.
Why should nations say, “Where is their God?”
You are in heaven, doing whatever You will.
Their idols are made of silver and gold—
the work of human hands—with mouths that cannot speak,
eyes that cannot see, ears that cannot hear, a nose that cannot smell.
They have hands but cannot touch, feet but cannot walk;
their throats do not utter a sound.

Their creators shall suffer that fate—all who have faith in them.

► People of Israel, trust in ADONAI, Israel’s protector and shield;
house of Aaron, trust in ADONAI, Aaron’s protector and shield;
all who revere ADONAI, trust in ADONAI, your protector and shield.

Atzabehem kesef v’zahav, ma-aseih y’dei adam.

Peh lahem v’lo y’dabeiru, einayim lahem v’lo yiru.

Oznayim lahem v’lo yishma-u, af lahem v’lo y’rihun.

Y’deihem v’lo y’mishun, ragleihem v’lo y’haleikhu, lo yehgu bigronam.

K’mohem yihyu oseihem, kol asher botei-ah bahem.

► *Yisrael b’tah badonai, ezram u-maginam hu.*

Beit aharon bit-hu vadonai, ezram u-maginam hu.

Yirei Adonai bit-hu vadonai, ezram u-maginam hu.

ADONAI, REMEMBERING US, will bless:

will bless the house of Israel,

will bless the house of Aaron,

will bless those who revere ADONAI, the lowly and the great.

ADONAI will add to your blessings—yours and your children.

For you are blessed by ADONAI, who formed heaven and earth:

► the heavens are God’s, the earth is given to human beings.

The dead do not celebrate God, nor any who go down to the grave,
but we shall bless God, now and always.

Halleluyah—joyfully praise ADONAI!

Adonai zekharanu y’varekh,

y’varekh et beit yisrael, y’varekh et beit aharon.

Y’varekh yirei Adonai, ha-k’tanim im ha-g’dolim.

Yosef Adonai aleikhem, aleikhem v’al b’neikhem.

B’rukhim atem ladonai, oseh shamayim va-aretz.

► *Ha-shamayim shamayim ladonai, v’ha-aretz natan livnei adam.*

Lo ha-meitim y’hal’lu yah v’lo kol yordei dumah.

Va-anahnu n’varekh yah mei-atah v’ad olam. Halleluyah.

Psalm 115

The following paragraph is omitted on Rosh Hodesh and the last six days of Pesah.

לֹא לָנוּ יְהוּה, לֹא לָנוּ, כִּי לְשִׁמְךָ יְתֵן כְּבוֹד,
עַל חֲסִדֶּךָ עַל אֲמִתּוֹתָ.
לָמָּה יֵאמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם, אֵיזָה נָא אֱלֹהֵיהֶם.
וְאֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּשָׁמַיִם, כֹּל אֲשֶׁר חָפֵץ עָשָׂה.
עֲצִבְיָהֶם כְּסָף וְזָהָב, מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם.
פֶּה לָהֶם וְלֹא יִדְבְּרוּ, עֵינַיִם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִרְאוּ.
אָזְנַיִם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ, אֵף לָהֶם וְלֹא יִרְחִיחוּ.
יְדֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִמְיִשוּן, רַגְלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִהְלְכוּ, לֹא יִהְיוּ בְּגִרוֹנָם.
כְּמוֹהֶם יִהְיוּ עֲשִׂיהֶם, כֹּל אֲשֶׁר בְּטַח בָּהֶם.
יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּטַח בִּיהוּה, עֲזָרָם וּמִגְנָם הוּא,
בַּיִת אֶהְרֹן בְּטַחוּ בִיהוּה, עֲזָרָם וּמִגְנָם הוּא,
יִרְאֵי יְהוּה בְּטַחוּ בִיהוּה, עֲזָרָם וּמִגְנָם הוּא.

יְהוּה זָכְרָנוּ יְבָרֵךְ,
יְבָרֵךְ אֶת־בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל,
יְבָרֵךְ אֶת־בַּיִת אֶהְרֹן.
יְבָרֵךְ יִרְאֵי יְהוּה, הַקְּטָנִים עִם הַגְּדֹלִים.
יִסֵּף יְהוּה עֲלֵיכֶם, עֲלֵיכֶם וְעַל בְּנֵיכֶם.
בְּרוּכִים אַתֶּם לִיהוּה, עֲשֵׂה שְׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ,
יְבָרֵךְ יִרְאֵי יְהוּה, וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן לַבְּנֵי אָדָם.
לֹא הִמְתִּים יְהִלְלוּ יָהּ וְלֹא כָּל־יִרְדֵי דוֹמָה,
וְאֶנְחָנוּ נְבָרֵךְ יָהּ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם. הַלְלוּיָהּ.
תהלים קטו

HATZI HALLEL. On Rosh Hodesh and the last six days of Pesah, a shorter version of Hallel, called Hatzit Hallel or "Partial Hallel," is recited. Originally Hallel was recited only on the three festivals (Pesah, Shavuot, and Sukkot) and Hanukkah (which was patterned after Sukkot). Hallel was not recited on the last six days of Pesah, because there were no unique Temple ceremonies on those days, as there were on each of the days of Sukkot. The Partial Hallel is a creation of the Jews of Babylonia, who expanded the liturgy in this way on festive days when Hallel was not recited in the Temple. In order to signify the difference between these days and the others, the first half of Psalms 115 and 116 was omitted (Babylonian Talmud, Ta-anit 28b). Later, midrashic reasons were given for this practice—for example, noting that because the miracle of the exodus was achieved through violence (with the drowning of the Egyptians in the sea), our joy in this moment is diminished and we therefore do not recite the full Hallel. (*Reuven Hammer, adapted*)

PSALM 115. Beginning with

Psalm 115, Hallel introduces a plea for God's continuing role in our lives. This psalm has two distinct stanzas, which in the recitation in the synagogue become almost separate poems. The first is an extended argument on the uselessness of idols, ending with a call to both priests and laypeople to trust in God. The second offers assurance of God's continued blessing of the people. The psalm concludes with the affirmation that God will indeed bless all who are alive. God's deliverance during the exodus from Egypt becomes a model for God's deliverance in any time of trouble.

THOSE WHO REVERE ADONAI יִרְאֵי יְהוּה. Commentators have offered two ways of understanding this phrase. It may refer to the collectivity of the assemblage: first the priests are addressed and then the laypeople; and finally, with this phrase, the group as a whole. Some see the term as referring to those who were not Israelites but were "God-fearing" and who joined in the celebration. In this understanding, the Temple service addressed non-Jews who joined in Jewish worship, blessed them, and asked that they too respond to the priests' call.

*The following paragraph is omitted on Rosh Hodesh
and the last six days of Pesah.*

I AM FILLED with love, for indeed, ADONAI heard my pleading voice,
turned an ear to me, in the days I called out.

Though the pangs of death embraced me,
and the earth's deep sought me out, though I met trouble and pain,
I called upon the name of ADONAI: "Please, ADONAI, save my life!"

ADONAI is kind and righteous;

our God is compassionate, guarding even the foolhardy.

Though I was brought low, God saved me.

"Be at ease," I said to myself, "for ADONAI has done this for you."

You have saved me from death,

my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling;

► I shall walk in God's presence in the land of the living.

I had faith in God and declared it, even as I suffered greatly
and called out in my delirium: "Everyone deceives."

HOW CAN I REPAY ADONAI for all that has been done for me?

I raise up the cup of deliverance, and call out the name: ADONAI.

I shall fulfill my vows to ADONAI in front of all of God's people.

How grave in ADONAI's sight is the death of the faithful!

Surely, ADONAI, I am Your servant,

I am the servant born of Your maidservant—

You have untied the bonds that bound me.

Anah Adonai ki ani avdekha, ani avd'kha ben amatekha, pitahta l'moseirai.

► It is to You that I sacrifice a thanksgiving offering,
and call upon the name of ADONAI.

I shall fulfill my vows to ADONAI

in the presence of the entire people of God,

in the courtyards of ADONAI's house, in your midst, O Jerusalem.

Halleluyah—joyfully praise God!

► *L'kha ezbaḥ zevaḥ todah u-v'shem Adonai ekra.*

N'darai l'adonai ashalem negdah na l'khol amo.

B'hatzrot beit Adonai, b'tokheikhi yerushalayim, halleluyah.

Psalm 116

The following paragraph is omitted on Rosh Hodesh and the last six days of Pesah.

אֶהְבֵּתִי כִּי יִשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קוֹלִי תַחֲנוּנָי.
כִּי הִטָּה אָזְנוֹ לִי וּבִימֵי אֶקְרָא.
אֶפְפוּנֵי חֶבְלֵי מוֹת וּמִצָּרֵי שְׂאוּל מִצְּאוּנֵי,
צָרָה וְיָגוֹן אֶמְצָא, וּבָשָׂם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא,
אָנָּה יְהוָה מִלְּטָה נַפְשִׁי.
חֲנוּן יְהוָה וְצַדִּיק, וְאַלְהֵינוּ מְרַחֵם,
שׁוֹמֵר פְּתָאִים יְהוָה.
דְּלוֹתַי וְלִי יְהוֹשִׁיעַ,
שׁוּבֵי נַפְשִׁי לְמִנוּחַיִכִי, כִּי יְהוָה גָּמַל עָלַיִכִי.
כִּי חִלַּצְתָּ נַפְשִׁי מִמּוֹת,
אֶת־עֵינַי מִן דְּמָעָה, אֶת־רַגְלִי מִדְּחִי.
◀ אֶתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה בְּאַרְצוֹת הַחַיִּים.
הָאֵמֶנְתִּי כִּי אֲדַבֵּר, אֲנִי עָנִיתִי מְאֹד.
אֲנִי אֶמְרֹתִי בַחֲפֹזִי, כָּל־הָאָדָם כֹּזֵב.

מָה אָשִׁיב לַיהוָה, כָּל־תַּגְּמוֹלוֹהִי עָלַי.
כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֶשָּׂא, וּבָשָׂם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא.
נִדְרֵי לַיהוָה אֲשַׁלֵּם נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל־עַמּוֹ.
יִקָּר בְּעֵינַי יְהוָה הַמּוֹתָה לַחֲסִידָיו.
אָנָּה יְהוָה כִּי אֲנִי עַבְדְּךָ, אֲנִי עַבְדְּךָ בְּנֵי־אֲמָתְךָ,
פְּתַחַת לְמוֹסְרֵי.
◀ לָךְ אֶזְבַּח זֶבַח תּוֹדָה וּבָשָׂם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא.
נִדְרֵי לַיהוָה אֲשַׁלֵּם, נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל־עַמּוֹ.
בַּחֲצֵרוֹת בַּיִת יְהוָה, בְּתוֹכְכִי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם. הַלְלוּ־יָהּ.

תהלים קטז

PSALM 116. The previous psalm told of God's rescue of the people Israel and the exodus from Egypt; now, Psalm 116 tells the story of rescue from the point of view of a single individual who has suffered and has returned to health. The psalm is also the story of faithfulness, even under the worst of circumstances.

When Hallel is shortened, the first eleven verses of Psalm 116—verses mentioning illness and distress—are left out; only the second half of the psalm—words offering thanksgiving—is recited.

I SHALL WALK IN GOD'S PRESENCE אֶתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה. The language here may echo the command to Abraham, "walk in My presence and be wholehearted" (Genesis 17:1). Just as Abraham received God's blessing, so too does the psalmist, who has been faithful to God.

I AM YOUR SERVANT אֲנִי עַבְדְּךָ. The ancient rabbis imagine God remarking: "You are My servants, and not the servants of servants" (Yalkut Shimoni, commenting on Leviticus 25:55). In saying that we are the servants of God and not of other human beings, the rabbis emphasized the dignity of each Jewish

person. For instance, they viewed as a sinner the Hebrew slave who insisted on remaining in his master's possession even after his term of indenture was up. Similarly, the morning blessings include thanksgiving to God "who made me free."

BONDS לְמוֹסְרֵי. Or "harness." The Hebrew word refers to the straps that tie down the burden an animal carries on its back.

JOYFULLY PRAISE ADONAI, all you nations,
extol God all you peoples;
for God has overwhelmed us with kindness and love,
and ADONAI's faithfulness endures forever.
Halleluyah—joyfully praise God!

Hallelu et Adonai kol goyim, shabḥuhu kol ha-umim.
Ki gavar aleinu ḥasdo, ve-emet Adonai l'olam. Halleluyah.

Psalm 117

Each of the following four verses is chanted first by the leader and then repeated by the congregation, verse by verse. Some follow the practice of the congregation repeating the entire first line ("Give thanks...") after each verse recited by the leader.

♣ Give thanks to ADONAI who is good; *God's love and kindness endure forever.*

♣ Let the house of Israel declare: *God's love and kindness endure forever.*

Let the house of Aaron declare: *God's love and kindness endure forever.*

Let those who revere ADONAI declare: *God's love and kindness endure forever.*

♣ Hodu l'adonai ki tov, ki l'olam ḥasdo.

♣ Yomar na yisrael, ki l'olam ḥasdo.

Yomru na veit aharon, ki l'olam ḥasdo.

Yomru na yirei Adonai, ki l'olam ḥasdo.

TORMENTED, I cried to ADONAI,
God answered me with open arms.

Min ha-meitzar karati yah, anani va-merḥav yah.

ADONAI is with me, I do not fear;
what can anyone do to me?

With ADONAI as my help, I face my enemies.

Better to depend on ADONAI than on human beings;

better to depend on ADONAI than on the prominent and powerful.

If any nation surrounds me, with God's name I shall cut them down.

Though they surround and encircle me, with God's name

I shall cut them down.

Though they swarm round me like bees,

they shall be stamped down like thorns on fire,

for with God's name, I shall cut them down.

Though I be pushed and stagger, ADONAI shall be my help.

continued

הִלְלוּ אֶת־יְהוָה, כָּל־גּוֹיִם, שִׁבְחוּהוּ, כָּל־הָאֲמִיּוֹת.
 בִּי גִבֹר עָלֵינוּ חֲסִדוֹ, וְאַמֶּת יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם, הִלְלוּיָהּ.

תהלים קיז

Each of the following four verses is chanted first by the leader and then repeated by the congregation, verse by verse. Some follow the practice of the congregation repeating the entire first line (הודו) after each verse recited by the leader.

✧ הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה בִּי טוֹב, בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ.
 ✧ יֹאמֶר נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל, בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ.
 יֹאמְרוּ נָא בֵּית אֱהֲרֹן, בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ.
 יֹאמְרוּ נָא יְרֵאֵי יְהוָה, בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ.

מִן הַמִּצָּר קָרָאתִי יְהוָה, עֲנֵנִי בַמְרוֹחַב יְהוָה.
 יְהוָה לִי לֹא אֵירָא, מִה יַעֲשֶׂה לִי אָדָם.
 יְהוָה לִי בְעֶזְרִי, וְאֲנִי אֲרָאָה בְשֹׁנְאֵי.
 טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בַּיהוָה, מִבְּטֹחַ בְּאָדָם.
 טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בַּיהוָה, מִבְּטֹחַ בַּנְּדִיבִים.
 כָּל־גּוֹיִם סָבְבוּנִי, בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה בִּי אֲמִילִם.
 סָבְבוּנִי גַם סָבְבוּנִי, בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה בִּי אֲמִילִם.
 סָבְבוּנִי כְדַבְרִים דַּעְכוּ בְּאֵשׁ קוֹצִים,
 בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה בִּי אֲמִילִם.
 דָּחָה דָּחִיתַנִּי לְנֶפֶל, וַיְהוֶה עֶזְרָנִי.

continued

antiphonal recitation of Hallel (Sukkah 3:11). It is preferable to follow the earlier rabbinic preference, in which the congregation repeats each line after the leader, verse by verse. However, according to an alternative medieval practice, the congregation responds with the first line—*Hodu l'adonai* ("Give thanks to Adonai")—after each verse recited by the leader. Local custom determines how these lines should be chanted.

TORMENTED . . . OPEN ARMS יְהוָה בַּמְרוֹחַב יְהוָה . . . מִן הַמִּצָּר. The Hebrew play on words is difficult to capture in English. *Meitzar*, translated here as "tormented" and by some as "distress," literally means "a narrow or tight place." *Merhav*, its antonym, translated here as "open arms," might literally be translated as "expansiveness." The experience of rescue and redemption is a journey from narrowness and constriction—a feeling of being tied in knots—to wide expanse—being untied and allowed to stretch out fully. The Hebrew is ambiguous about whether it is God who answers "expansively" or whether the supplicant is now able to have an open heart.

I SHALL CUT THEM DOWN אֲמִילִם. The Hebrew root is uncertain. It may derive from the preposition *mul* (that is: those who stand over against me). Our translation takes it from the verbal root *mul*, "cut off," as in its use in connection with circumcision, *b'rit milah*. Alternatively, it may also derive from *millel*, "speak"; it would then have the meaning "I quieted them" (literally, "I shut them up").

THORNS ON FIRE בְּאֵשׁ קוֹצִים. The fire will be put out quickly and easily, for it is fed only by thin needles. The image of thorns is apt, since the line begins with an image of being surrounded by bees.

PSALM 118 is composed of several sections. It begins with an opening call and response, proclaiming God's enduring love. In the next section, the poet praises God after having recovered from the depths of despair or a life-threatening event—an illness, or perhaps an attack by an enemy. A section filled with expressions of thanks follows. The devotee then enters God's Temple, calling on God for further help, and ends by expressing thankfulness. In the formal synagogue recitation of Hallel, each of these sections is experienced separately; in many medieval manuscripts of the Book of Psalms, the different sections appear as separate psalms.

GIVE THANKS TO ADONAI הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה. There are a variety of traditions for how exactly the interplay between leader and congregation is to proceed; already in the Mishnah, there is an acknowledgment that different communities have different traditions for the

ADONAI is my strength—I sing to God who rescued me.
In the tents of the righteous, voices resound with song and triumph.
God's right arm is like an army,
God's right arm is upraised, God's right arm is like an army.

Ozi v'zimrat yah, va-y'hi li lishuah.

Kol rinah vishuah b'oholei tzadikim, y'min Adonai osah hayil.

Y'min Adonai romeimah, y'min Adonai osah hayil.

I shall not die, but live to tell of ADONAI's deeds.
Though ADONAI chastened me, God did not hand me over to death.

► Open for me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them, to thank ADONAI.

This is the gateway to ADONAI; through it the righteous shall enter.

► Pit-ḥu li sha-arei tzedek, avo vam, odeh yah. Zeh ha-sha-ar l'adonai, tzadikim yavo-u vo.

Psalm 118:1–20

Each of the following four verses is recited twice:

I will offer thanks to You, for You answered me, and You were my rescuer.

The stone the builders rejected has become the keystone.

This is ADONAI's doing; how wondrous it is in our sight.

This is the day that ADONAI has made; we shall celebrate and rejoice in it.

Od'kha ki anitani va-t'hi li lishuah.

Even ma-asu ha-bonim haitah l'rosh pinah.

Mei-eit Adonai haitah zot, hi niflat b'eineinu.

Zeh hayom asah Adonai, nagilah v'nism'hah vo.

The leader chants each of the next four lines, which are in turn repeated by the congregation:

✡ ADONAI, we implore You: deliver us. ✡ ADONAI, we implore You: deliver us.

ADONAI, we implore You: grant us success. ADONAI, we implore You: grant us success.

✡ Ana Adonai hoshi-ah na. ✡ Ana Adonai hoshi-ah na.

Ana Adonai hatzliḥah na. Ana Adonai hatzliḥah na.

Each of the following four verses is recited twice:

Blessed are you who come in the name of ADONAI;

may the blessings of the house of ADONAI be upon you.

ADONAI is our God, lighting our path. *Dress the horns of the altar with branches of myrtle
in celebration of the festival.*

You are my God and I offer thanks to You; My God, I exalt You.

✡ Give thanks to ADONAI who is good; God's love and kindness endure forever.

Barukh haba b'sheim Adonai, beirakh-nukhem mi-beit Adonai.

El Adonai vaya-er lanu, isru ḥag ba-avotim ad karnot ha-mizbei-ah.

Eili atah v'odeka, elohai arom'meka.

✡ Hodu l'adonai ki tov, ki l'olam ḥasdo.

Psalm 118:21–29

עָזִי וְזַמְרַת יְהוָה, וַיְהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה.
 קוֹל רִנָּה וַיִּשְׁוַעָה בְּאֶהְלֵי צַדִּיקִים,
 יָמִין יְהוָה עָשָׂה חַיִּל.
 יָמִין יְהוָה רוֹמְמָה, יָמִין יְהוָה עָשָׂה חַיִּל.
 לֹא אָמוֹת כִּי אַחֲיָהּ, וְאַסְפֵּר מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה.
 יִסֹּר יִסְרָפְנֵי יְהוָה, וְלִמְּוֹת לֹא נִתְנַנְּנִי.
 ◀ פִּתְחוּ לִי שַׁעֲרֵי צְדָקָה, אָבֹא בָם אוֹדֶה יְהוָה.
 זֶה הַשְּׁעָר לַיהוָה, צַדִּיקִים יָבֹאוּ בּוֹ.
 תהלים קיח:א-ב

Each of the following four verses is recited twice:

אוֹדֶךָ כִּי עֲנִיתָנִי, וַתְּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה.
 אָבֹן מֵאֲסוֹ הַבּוֹנִים, הִיְתָה לְרֹאשׁ פְּנֵה.
 מֵאֵת יְהוָה הִיְתָה זֹאת, הִיא נִפְלְאֹת בְּעֵינֵינוּ.
 זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה יְהוָה, נִגְלִיָּה וְנִשְׁמָחָה בּוֹ.

The leader chants each of the next four lines, which are in turn repeated by the congregation:

✦ אָנָּה יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא.
 ✦ אָנָּה יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא.
 אָנָּה יְהוָה הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא.
 אָנָּה יְהוָה הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא.

Each of the following four verses is recited twice:

בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה, בְּרִכְנוּכֶם מִבֵּית יְהוָה.
 אֵל יְהוָה וַיֵּאָר לָנוּ, אֲסֵרוּ חַג בְּעַבְתֵּימָם עַד קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ.
 אֵלֵי אֲתָה וְאוֹדֶךָ, אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ.
 ✦ הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ.

תהלים קיח:כא-כט

ADONAI IS MY STRENGTH עָזִי וְזַמְרַת יְהוָה. The psalmist quotes the Song at the Sea (Exodus 15:2), as if to say that each experience of rescue is a re-experience of the exodus from Egypt, and thus an occasion for similarly exultant song.

I WILL OFFER THANKS אוֹדֶךָ. The psalms of Hallel move back and forth between expressions of gratitude and pleas for help. These four verses represent the height of personal and communal celebration in Hallel, out of which arises an especially terse and intense plea for deliverance and success in our lives.

KEYSTONE לְרֹאשׁ פְּנֵה. The keystone tops the arch. It is a small stone which is specially selected but which when in place holds the whole structure in balance. In this image, the people Israel have been specially selected to be the height of creation, the key to its being able to stand firm. (Benjamin Sommer)

MAY THE BLESSINGS OF THE HOUSE OF ADONAI BE UPON YOU בְּרִכְנוּכֶם מִבֵּית יְהוָה. Literally, “We bless you from the house of Adonai.” In its biblical context, this was probably a priestly statement of blessing.

DRESS אֲסֵרוּ חַג. There is some dispute as to the

meaning of the Hebrew verb. Some scholars suggest that it is related to the Akkadian verb meaning “to surround,” which would then mean: “Surround the horns of the altar.” Others take it to mean “bind the festal offering to the horns of the altar with cords.” Our translation here attempts to convey nuances of both of these interpretations. The ancient rabbis interpreted the phrase *isru hag* as the day after the festival.

MYRTLE עֲבֹתִים (*avotim*). In Leviticus 23:40, which mentions the *lulav* and *etrog* in connection with Sukkot, the myrtle is called the “thick tree” (*eitz avot*). Perhaps the entire phrase was an instruction that this is the moment the myrtle is tied to the altar, and that the instruction, originally noted in the margin of the psalm, eventually became incorporated into the body of the psalm; we have therefore put the phrase in italics.

SERVICE FOR THE READING OF THE TORAH

ISAIAH 60:1-2

In the days to come,
The Mount of the
Lord's House
Shall stand firm above the
mountains
And tower above the hills;
And all the nations
Shall gaze on it with joy.
And the many peoples shall
go and say:
"Come,
Let us go up to the Mount
of the Lord,
to the House of the God of
Jacob;
that He may instruct us in His ways,
And that we may walk in His paths."



For Instruction shall come forth from Zion,
The word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה וּדְבַר ה' מִירוּשָׁלַיִם
(KEE MEE TZEE YAWN TAY TZAY TAWRAH
U'D'VAHR AH DAW NAI MEE Y'RU SHAH LAH YEEM)

He will judge among the nations
And arbitrate for the many peoples,
And they shall beat their swords into plowshares
And their spears into pruning hooks:
Nation shall not take up
Sword against nation;
they shall never learn to make war
again .

(LAW YEE-SAH GOY EHL GOY KHEH-REHV
V'LAW YIL-M'DU AWD MIL-KHAH-MAH)

יְיָ יֵשֶׁא גּוֹי אֶל-גּוֹי חֶרֶב
וְיֵא-יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה

Blessed is the ONE WHO has given Torah to His People Israel with His Holiness

בְּרוּךְ שֶׁנָּתַן תוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדּוּשָׁתוֹ
(BAH-RUKH SHEH-NAH-TAHN TAW-RAH
L'AH-MAW YIS-RAH-EHL BIK-DU-SHAH-TAW)

בְּרִיךְ שֵׁמָּה דְמִרָא עֲלֵמָא

Blessed be the Name of the Master of the universe .

(congregation together)

May Your partnership with Your People of Israel last forever .

May the goodness of Your light reach out to us in Your sacred place to receive our prayers with mercy .

May it be Your will to lengthen our lives with goodness .

You are the provider of sustenance and support for all people .

You are the true Ruler over all .

We are the servants of the Holy Source of Blessing , before Whom and before Whose Torah we bow at all times . It is not in human beings that we rely, nor upon any divine being that we depend, rather upon the God of the heavens Who is the God of truth, Whose Torah is true , and Whose prophets are teachers of truth , and Who is great in bringing about Goodness and Truth .

In God we trust , and to the sacred and precious reality of God's existence we sing praises .

בְּה אֲנָה רַחֵץ וּלְשֵׁמָה קְדִישָׁא קְדִישָׁא יְקִירָא

BAY AH-NAH RAH-KHETZ V'LISH-MAY KAH-DEE-SHAH KAH-DEE-SHAH YAH-KEE-RAH

אֲנָה אָמַר תּוֹשְׁבַחַן

AH-NAH AH-MAHR TU'U-SH'B'KHAHN

May it be Your will that You open our hearts with Your Torah , and that You will bring to completion the wishes of our hearts and of the hearts of all Your people Israel - FOR GOOD , and for LIFE , and for PEACE . Amen

יְהֵא רַעוּא קְדָמְךָ דְתַפְתַּח לְבִי בְּאוּרֵיתָא

Y'HAY RAH-AH-VAH KAH-DAH-MAHKH D'TIF'TAHKH LEE-BEE B'AW-RAI'TAH

וּתְשַׁלֵּם מִשְׁאַלֵּין דְלְבִי וּלְבֵא דְכָל עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל

V'TAHSH-LEEM MISH'AH-LIN D'LEE-BEE V'LEE-BAH D'KHAWL AH-MAHKH YIS-RAH-EHL

לְטַב וּלְחַיִּין וּלְשָׁלָם . אָמֵן

L'TAHV U'L'KHAH-YEEN V'LISH'LAHM . AMEN

*I Spread Out God's
Names in Front of Me*

I spread out God's names
in front of me
on the floor of my chilly
room.

The name by which I
called him when his
spirit breathed in me.

And the name by which I
called him when I was a
young girl.

The name by which I
called him when I was
given to a man.

And the name when I was
again permitted to all.

The name by which I
called him when my
parents were a roof over
me. And the name when
I had no ceiling.

The name by which I
called him so that I
would fear him. And the
name by which I called
him so that I would not
be afraid.

The name by which I
called him so that he
would remember me.
And the name so that
he would refrain from
remembering.

In the heat of day I will
prostate myself
on the floor of my chilly
room.

—RIVKA MIRIAM
(translated by
Linda Stern Zisquit)

Aleinu

We rise:

It is for us to praise the ruler of all,
to acclaim the Creator,
who has not made us merely a nation,
nor formed us as all earthly families,
nor given us an ordinary destiny.

¶ And so we bow, acknowledging the supreme sovereign
the Holy One, who is praised—
who spreads out the heavens and establishes the earth,
whose glory abides in the highest heavens,
and whose powerful presence resides in the highest heights.
This is our God, none else; ours is the true sovereign,
there is no other.

As it is written in the Torah:

“Know this day and take it to heart,
that ADONAI is God in heaven above and on earth below
there is no other.”

*Aleinu l'shabei-ah la-adon hakol,
lateit g'dulah l'yotzer b'reishit,
shelo asanu k'goyei ha-aratzot,
v'lo samanu k'mishp'hot ha-adamah,
shelo sam helkeinu kahem,
v'goraleinu k'khol hamonam.*

¶ *Va-anahnu korim u-mishta'avim u-modim,
lifnei melekh malkhei ha-m'lakhim, ha-kadosh barukh hu.*

*Shehu noteh shamayim v'yosed aretz,
u-moshav y'karo ba-shamayim mima-al,
u-sh'khinat uzo b'govhei m'romim,
hu eloheinu ein od.*

*Emet malkeinu efes zulato,
ka-katuv b'torato:*

*v'yadata ha-yom vahashevota el l'vavekha, ki Adonai hu ha-elohim
bashamayim mima-al, v'al ha-aretz mitahat, ein od.*

We rise:

עֲלֵינוּ לְשַׁבַּח לְאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל,
לְתַת גְּדֻלָּה לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית,
שֶׁלֹא עָשָׂנוּ כְּגוֹיֵי הָאָרְצוֹת,
וְלֹא שָׁמְנוּ כְּמִשְׁפָּחוֹת הָאֲדָמָה,
שֶׁלֹא שָׁם חִלְקֵנוּ כָּהֵם,
וְגִרְלָנוּ כְּכָל־הַמוֹנֵם.
וְאִנְחָנוּ בּוֹרְעִים וּמְשַׁתְּחוּיִם וּמוֹדִים,
לְפָנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמַּלְכִּים, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.
שֶׁהוּא נוֹטֵה שָׁמַיִם וְיִסַּד אֶרֶץ,
וּמוֹשֵׁב יְקָרוֹ בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל,
וְשֹׁכֵנֵת עִזּוֹ בְּגִבְהֵי מְרוֹמִים,
הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֵין עוֹד.
אֲמַת מִלְכָּנוּ אָפֶס זוּלָתוֹ,
כְּפִתּוּב בְּתוֹרָתוֹ:
וַיִּדְעַת הַיּוֹם וְהַשַּׁבָּת אֶל לְבַבָּהּ,
כִּי יְהוּה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל,
וְעַל הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת, אֵין עוֹד.

ALEINU. Since the 12th or 13th century, the Aleinu prayer has acquired a special pride of place in Ashkenazic liturgy and is recited at the conclusion of every service; it does not play the same role in the Sephardic liturgy.

The origin of this popular prayer is a matter of debate. Some medieval sources (e.g. Rokeah, early 13th century, Germany) ascribed it to Joshua. The liturgical scholar Joseph Heinemann thought that it dates back to the time of the Temple service. Other scholars have argued that it originated in 2nd- or 3rd-century mystical circles. Its first known use in the formal liturgy is as an introduction to the Malkhuyot (“Sovereignty”) section of the Rosh Hashanah Musaf service.

Aleinu articulates a progression of ideas. In the first paragraph, we are asked to

express our gratitude for the special fate and role of the Jewish people in history. In the second, we look forward to the day when differences among peoples will be harmonized and there will be a common recognition that all of humanity is embraced by God. This vision recognizes that God is not exclusively the God of Israel, but that God rules over all of us. On that day, when justice, morality, and common spiritual affinity will reign on earth, God’s name will truly be one.

Some have objected to what may sound like exclusivist language in this prayer, in particular the phrases describing the uniqueness of the people Israel: “who has not made us merely a nation, nor formed us as all earthly families, nor given us an ordinary destiny.” The Israeli Masorti Movement offers an alternative formulation quoting Micah 4:5: “For the people of every nation shall walk in the name of their god, but we shall walk in the name of Adonai, our God, forever.” Whether articulated with this wording or the standard text, Aleinu both asserts a pride in Jewish destiny and challenges us to go out to the world committed to Jewish spiritual values.

AND SO WE BOW וַאֲנַחְנוּ בּוֹרְעִים. The prayer mentions a variety of forms of bowing. In ancient times, *korim* meant touching the floor with one’s knees, and *mishtahavim* meant bending at the waist. However, the ancient rabbis minimized the bowing that takes place in the service, and so today it is customary to simply bow one’s head or slightly bend one’s body at this point in the prayer.

KNOW THIS DAY וַיִּדְעַת הַיּוֹם. Deuteronomy 4:39.

In the Days to Come

In the days to come,
the Mount of Adonai's
house shall stand firm
above the mountains,
and it shall tower over the
hills.
The peoples shall gaze on
it with joy,
and many nations shall go
and shall say,
"Come, let us go up to the
Mount of Adonai,
to the House of the God
of Jacob;
that God may instruct us in
God's ways, and that we
may walk in God's paths."
For instruction shall come
forth from Zion,
and the word of Adonai
from Jerusalem.
Thus God will judge
among the many peoples,
and arbitrate for the multi-
tude of nations, however
distant.
They shall beat their
swords into plowshares
and their spears into prun-
ing hooks.
Nation shall not lift up
sword against nation,
neither shall they learn
war anymore;
but everyone shall sit
under their grapevine or
fig tree
with no one to disturb
them.
For it was Adonai of Hosts
who has spoken.
For the people of every
nation shall walk in the
name of their god, but
we shall walk in the
name of Adonai, our
God, forever.

—MICAH 4:1-5

And so, ADONAI our God, we await You,
that soon we may behold Your strength revealed in full glory,
sweeping away the abominations of the earth,
obliterating idols,
establishing in the world the sovereignty of the Almighty.
All flesh will call out Your name—
even the wicked will turn toward You.
Then all who live on earth will understand and know
that to You alone every knee must bend,
all allegiance be sworn.
They will bow down and prostrate themselves before You,
ADONAI our God,
treasure Your glorious name,
and accept the obligation of Your sovereignty.
May You soon rule over them forever and ever,
for true dominion is Yours;
and You will rule in glory until the end of time.

► As is written in Your Torah:

"ADONAI will reign forever and ever."

And as the prophet said:

"ADONAI shall be acknowledged sovereign of all the earth.

On that day ADONAI shall be one, and the name of God, one."

*V'ne-emar: v'hayah Adonai l'melekh al kol ha-aretz,
bayom hahu yihyeh Adonai ehad, u-sh'mo ehad.*

We are seated.

עַל בֵּן נִקְוָה לְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
 לְרֵאוֹת מְהֵרָה בְּתַפְאֶרֶת עֲזָךְ,
 לְהַעֲבִיר גְּלוּלִים מִן הָאָרֶץ,
 וְהָאֲלִילִים כְּרוֹת יַכְרִתוּן,
 לְתַקֵּן עוֹלָם בְּמַלְכוּת שְׁדֵי,
 וְכָל־בְּנֵי בָשָׂר יִקְרְאוּ בְשִׁמְךָ,
 לְהַפְנוֹת אֵלֶיךָ כָּל־רְשָׁעֵי אָרֶץ.
 יִכְיִרוּ וַיִּדְעוּ כָּל־יְשׁוּבֵי תֵבֶל,
 כִּי לְךָ תִּכְרַע כָּל־בָּרָה,
 תִּשָּׁבַע כָּל־לְשׁוֹן.
 לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִכְרְעוּ וַיִּפְּלוּ,
 וְלִכְבוֹד שִׁמְךָ יִקְרְאוּ יִתְנוּ,
 וַיִּקְבְּלוּ כָּלֶם אֶת־עַל מַלְכוּתְךָ.
 וְתִמְלֹךְ עֲלֵיהֶם מְהֵרָה לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד,
 כִּי הַמַּלְכוּת שְׁלֹךְ הִיא,
 וְלְעוֹלָמִי עַד תִּמְלֹךְ בְּכָבוֹד.

◀ כַּפְתוּב בְּתוֹרַתְךָ: יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֵלָם וָעֶד.
 וְנֶאֱמַר: וְהָיָה יְהוָה לְמֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל־הָאָרֶץ,
 בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה יְהוָה אֶחָד, וְשִׁמוֹ אֶחָד.

We are seated.

ESTABLISHING IN THE WORLD THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE ALMIGHTY לתקן עולם במלכות שדי. Beginning in the 19th century, this phrase came to be seen as similar to Isaiah's call to be a "light unto the nations," and it was thus interpreted as a call to universal justice. In this vein, the phrase *l'takken olam* was understood to mean "to repair the world"—that is, to be partners with God in achieving a time of peace and righteousness. Even earlier, Maimonides (12th century) had argued that the single most important characteristic of messianic times would be an end to one people dominating another (Mishneh Torah, Hilkhoh Melakhim 12:2).

ADONAI WILL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER יהוה ימלך לעולם ועד. Exodus 15:18.

ON THAT DAY ADONAI SHALL BE ONE ביום ההוא יהוה אחד. Zechariah 14:9. In reciting the Sh'ma, we declare that God is one. Through our prayer, we hope to make God one with the world. As this prayer marks the conclusion of the service, it ends with a vision of the future.

Mourner's Kaddish

May God's great name be exalted and hallowed throughout the created world, as is God's wish. May God's sovereignty soon be established, in your lifetime and in your days, and in the days of all the house of Israel. And we say: *Amen*.

May God's great name be acknowledged forever and ever!

May the name of the Holy One be acknowledged and celebrated, lauded and worshipped, exalted and honored, extolled and acclaimed—though God, who is blessed, *b'rikh hu*, is truly beyond all acknowledgment and praise, or any expressions of gratitude or consolation ever spoken in the world. And we say: *Amen*.

May heaven bestow on us, and on all Israel, life and abundant and lasting peace. And we say: *Amen*.

May the one who creates peace on high bring peace to us and to all Israel [and to all who dwell on earth].
And we say: *Amen*.

Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'meih raba, b'alma di v'ra, kiruteih,
v'yamlikh malkhuteih b'hayeikhon u-v'yomeikhon
u-v'hayei d'khol beit yisrael, ba-agala u-vizman kariv,
v'imru amen.

Y'hei sh'meih raba m'varakh l'alam u-l'almei almaya.

Yitbarakh v'yishtabah v'yitpa-ar v'yitromam v'yitnasei v'yit-hadar
v'yitaleh v'yit-halal sh'meih d'kudsha, b'rikh hu,
l'eila min kol birkhata v'shirata tushb'hata v'nehamata
da-amiran b'alma, v'imru amen.

Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya v'hayim aleinu v'al kol yisrael,
v'imru amen.

Oseh shalom bimromav hu ya-aseh shalom aleinu
v'al kol yisrael [v'al kol yosh'vei teiveil],
v'imru amen.

We are seated.

קדיש יתום

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא,
בְּעֻלְמָא דֵּי בְּרָא, כְּרַעוּתָהּ,
וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזָמַן קָרִיב,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמֵיָא.

יְתַבְרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא
וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלַּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא, בְּרִיף הוּא,
לְעָלְמָא מִן כָּל־בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא
וְנַחֲמָתָא דְּאִמִּירָן בְּעֻלְמָא,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל [וְעַל כָּל־יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵּבֵל],
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

We are seated.

The service concludes with a song. Two choices are given here, but other songs may be selected, such as those on pages 82–85.



ADON OLAM

Before creation shaped the world,
eternally God reigned alone;
but only with creation done
could God as Sovereign be known.
When all is ended, God alone
will reign in wondrous majesty.
God was, God is, always will be
glorious in eternity.
God is unique and without peer,
with none at all to be compared.
Without beginning, endlessly,
God's vast dominion is not shared.
But still—my God, my only hope,
my one true refuge in distress,
My shelter sure, my cup of life,
with goodness real and limitless.
I place my spirit in God's care;
my body too can feel God near.
When I sleep, as when I wake,
God is with me, I have no fear.

Adon olam asher malakh	b'terem kol y'tzir nivra.
Let na-asah v'heftzo kol	azai melek sh'mo nikra.
V'aharei ki-kh'lot ha-kol	l'vado yimlokh nora.
V'hu hayah v'hu hoveh	v'hu yihyeh b'tifarah.
V'hu ehad v'ei sheni	l'hamshil lo l'ha'birah.
B'li reishit b'li takhlit	v'lo ha-oz v'ha-misrah.
V'hu eli v'hai go-ali	v'tzur hevli b'et tzarah.
V'hu nisi u-manos li	m'nat kosi b'yom ekra.
B'yado afkid ruhi	b'ait ishan v'a-irah
V'im ruhi g'viyati	Adonai li v'lo ira.

The service concludes with a song. Two choices are given here, but other songs may be selected, such as those on pages 82–85.

אָדוֹן עוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר מֶלֶךְ,
לַעֲת נַעֲשֶׂה בְּחֶפְצוֹ כָּל,
וְאַחֲרֵי כְּבִלוֹת הַכֹּל,
וְהוּא הָיָה וְהוּא הוֹה,
וְהוּא אֶחָד וְאֵין שְׁנַי,
בְּלִי רֵאשִׁית בְּלִי תְּכֵלִית,
וְהוּא אֱלֹהֵי וְחַי גָּאֵלֵי,
וְהוּא נְסִי וּמְנוּס לִי,
בְּיָדוֹ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי,
וְעַם רוּחִי גּוֹיֵתִי,
בְּטָרֶם כָּל־יִצִּיר נִבְרָא.
אֲזֵי מֶלֶךְ שְׁמוֹ נִקְרָא.
לְבַדּוֹ יִמְלֹךְ גּוֹרָא.
וְהוּא יְהִיָּה בְּתַפְאָרָה.
לְהַמְשִׁיל לוֹ לְהַחְבִּירָה.
וְלוֹ הָעֵז וְהַמְשָׁרָה.
וְצוּר חֻבְלֵי בְּעַת צָרָה.
מְנַת כּוֹסֵי בְּיּוֹם אֶקְרָא.
בְּעַת אִישָׁן וְאַעִירָה.
יְהוּה לִי וְלֹא אִירָא.

א

ADON OLAM אָדוֹן עוֹלָם. It is unclear who authored this thousand-year-old poem, but it appears in the beginning of the morning service, at the conclusion of the Musaf (additional) service, and also at the end of evening services, in both the Ashkenazic and Sephardic liturgies. (The latter version, however, contains several more verses than are found in the former.) The poem is composed of two parts. The first half of the poem is a series of philosophic or credal statements about God. But as it moves toward its conclusion, the poem changes in mood and becomes a personal statement of faith and even of intimacy with God. This idea is expressed in the penultimate line with the words *b'yado afkid ruhi*, "I place my spirit in God's care."