TEEN MACHZOR

מַחְזוֹר

BY LORRY BLACK

HIGH HOLY DAYS

The book is open. The handwriting is yours.

ROSH HASHANAH · YOM KIPPUR

5787

START HERE

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

1 **One book, both days.** Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur share most of a service. Where they split, the top of the page tells you which day you're in.

2 **You don't have to keep up.** If one line stops you, stay there and let the room move on without you. Getting through every page was never the point.

3 There are questions in here with lines under them. **Write in this book.** It's yours. No one collects it, no one grades it, and nobody else reads it.

4 **Doubt is not a disqualification.** Arguing with it is a legitimately Jewish way to be here. Showing up counts.

KEY

Three labels repeat throughout the book. Each one looks like this on the page:

KAVANAH

Gold on a dark block. An intention — a modern way into an ancient text. Read it slowly, once.

SIT WITH THIS

Orange, above ruled lines. A question worth answering, with a nudge underneath so you don't stop at one word.

YOM KIPPUR

Solid orange, top right. Marks a page used on one day only. Anything unmarked belongs to both.

WHAT'S IN HERE

I **ARRIVE** You got in the door. That already counts.

II **GATHER** One voice calls. A room answers.

III **LISTEN** Six words, and everything after them.

IV **STAND** Feet together. The rest of the year waits.

V **ALONE** No page number can help you here.

VI **OPEN** The doors open. So does the ask.

VII **GO** Whole again, and louder.

WORDS YOU'LL HEAR

GLOSSARY

Nobody is going to stop and explain these. Now somebody has.

MACHZOR מַחֲזוֹר
The book in your hands. The root means **cycle** — this book only comes out once a year, when the year comes back around.

YAMIM NORA'IM יָמִים נוֹרָאִים
The **Days of Awe** — the ten days running from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur. That's the window this whole book lives in.

T'SHUVAH תְּשׁוּבָה
Usually translated **repentance**. It literally means **return** — less about grovelling, more about turning back toward something.

AMIDAH עֲמִידָה
The **standing** prayer — the long central one you say on your feet, feet together.

KAVANAH כַּוָּנָה
The **intention** you bring. Its opposite is *keva*, the fixed words on the page. You need both.

PIYYUT פִּיּוּט
A **liturgical poem** dropped into the service by a poet, sometimes centuries later. Un'taneh Tokef is one.

SHOFAR שׁוֹפָר
A **ram's horn**. Not a musical instrument so much as an alarm clock with a very long history.

ALIYAH עֲלִיָּה
Literally **going up** — being called up to say the blessings over a Torah reading.

HAFTARAH הַפְטָרָה
The reading from the **prophets** that follows the Torah reading.

CHESHBON HANEFESH חֶשְׁבּוֹן הַנֶּפֶשׁ
An **accounting of the soul**. A yearly personal audit — there's a page for it later in this book.

PART I



ARRIVE

You got in the door. That already counts.

01
MA TOVU

WALKING IN

מַה טֹּבוּ

HOW LOVELY ARE YOUR TENTS

> The first words said on walking into the room — and they're a compliment paid by an outsider. Balaam was hired to curse the Israelites, looked down at their camp, and this came out instead.

מַה טֹּבוּ אׇהָלֶיךָ יַעֲקֹב, מִשְׁכְּנֹתֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Mah tovu ohalecha Ya'akov, mishk'notecha Yisrael.

How lovely are your tents, O Jacob; your dwelling places, O Israel.

וַאֲנִי בְּרֹב חַסְדְּךָ אָבוֹא בֵיתֶךָ, אֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶל הֵיכַל קָדְשְׁךָ בְּיִרְאָתֶךָ.

Va'ani b'rov chasd'cha avo veitecha, eshtachaveh el heichal kodsh'cha b'yiratecha.

In Your abundant love I enter Your house; in awe I bow toward Your holy place.

יְיָ אָהַבְתִּי מְעוֹן בֵּיתֶךָ, וּמְקוֹם מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדֶךָ.

Adonai ahavti m'on beitecha, um'kom mishkan k'vodecha.

Eternal One, I love the house where You dwell, the place where Your glory rests.

וַאֲנִי תְפִלָּתִי לְךָ יְיָ עֵת רָצוֹן, אֱלֹהִים בְּרֹב חַסְדֶּךָ, עֲנֵנִי בֶּאֱמֶת יִשְׁעֶךָ.

Va'ani t'filati l'cha Adonai eit ratzon, Elohim b'rov chasdecha, aneini be'emet yishecha.

As for me, may my prayer come to You at a favorable time. In Your great love, God, answer me with Your saving truth.

"Knowing what it's like to feel like I was the outsider is the most Jewish thing about me."

RABBI ANGELA WARNICK BUCHDAHL
Central Synagogue, New York, CBS News, 2025

KAVANAH

Balaam wasn't looking at buildings. He was looking at how a people lived with each other, and it stopped him mid-curse. Look around this room before you sit down — you are part of what somebody else is seeing.

SIT WITH THIS

What makes a place feel like somewhere you belong?

> Name an actual place. Then finish the sentence: "I knew I belonged there when _____."

“

ON WALKING IN AS YOUR WHOLE SELF

I belong as a Black man, I belong as a gay man, I belong as a Jewish person, I belong as a Southerner.

MICHAEL W. TWITTY

Culinary historian, author of Koshersoul, interviewed in Modern Farmer, 2022

02
ASHER YATZAR

THE BODY

אֲשֶׁר יָצַר

FOR THE BODY

> Yes — this is, historically, the blessing said after using the bathroom. It is also the only prayer in Judaism that stops to notice that your body is an unlikely machine that mostly works.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam,

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe,

אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת הָאָדָם בְּחָכְמָה, וּבָרָא בוֹ נְקָבִים נְקָבִים, חֲלוּלִים חֲלוּלִים.

asher yatzar et ha'adam b'chochmah, uvara vo n'kavim n'kavim, chalulim chalulim.

who formed the human body with wisdom, creating within it openings and passages.

גָּלוּי וְיָדוּעַ לִפְנֵי כִסֵּא כְבוֹדֶךָ, שֶׁאִם יִפָּתֵחַ אֶחָד מֵהֶם, אוֹ יִסָּתֵם אֶחָד מֵהֶם,

Galui v'yadua lifnei chisei ch'vodecha, she'im yipatei'ach echad meihem, o yisateim echad meihem,

It is well known that if even one of them were to be blocked, or one of them opened when it should not be,

אִי אֶפְשַׁר לְהִתְקַיֵּם וְלַעֲמוֹד לְפָנֶיךָ.

i efshar l'hitkayeim v'la'amod l'fanecha.

it would be impossible to survive and to stand before You.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, רוֹפֵא כָל בָּשָׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

Baruch atah Adonai, rofei chol basar umafli la'asot.

Blessed are You, Eternal One, healer of all flesh, working wonders.

KAVANAH

Nothing about your body working today was guaranteed. It is doing several thousand things right now that you did not ask it to do.

SIT WITH THIS

When did you last thank your body instead of criticizing it?

> If the honest answer is "never," write that down. Then name one thing your body did for you this week without being asked.

03

THE SOUL

ELOHAI NESHAMAH

נְשָׁמָה

THE SOUL

> The very first thing this prayer says about you is that you're pure. Not broken, not behind, not a project to fix. Before anything else happens today: the soul in you is clean.

אֱלֹהַי, נְשָׁמָה שֶׁנָּתַתָּ בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא.

Elohai, n'shamah shenatata bi t'horah hi.
My God, the soul You have given me is pure.

אַתָּה בְרָאתָהּ, אַתָּה יְצַרְתָּהּ, אַתָּה נְפַחְתָּהּ בִּי,

Atah v'ratah, atah y'tzartah, atah n'fachtah bi,
You created it, You formed it, You breathed it into me,

וְאַתָּה מְשַׁמְּרָהּ בְּקִרְבִּי,

v'atah m'shamrah b'kirbi,
and You guard it within me.

וְאַתָּה עָתִיד לִטְלָהּ מִמֶּנִּי וּלְהַחֲזִירָהּ בִּי לֶעָתִיד לָבֹא.

v'atah atid litlah mimeni ul'hachazirah bi le'atid lavo.
One day You will take it from me, and restore it to me in the time to come.

כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמָה בְּקִרְבִּי, מוֹדֶה/מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ,

Kol z'man shehan'shamah v'kirbi, modeh/modah ani l'fanecha,
As long as this soul is within me, I thank You,

יְיָ אֱלֹהַי וֵאלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי וְאִמּוֹתַי,

Adonai Elohai vElohei avotai v'imotai,
Eternal One, my God and God of my ancestors,

רִבּוֹן כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים, אֲדוֹן כָּל הַנְּשָׁמוֹת.

ribon kol hama'asim, adon kol han'shamot.
Source of all creation, Ruler of all souls.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ נֶפֶשׁ כָּל חַי וְרוּחַ כָּל בְּשַׂר.

Baruch atah Adonai, asher b'yado nefesh kol chai v'ruach kol basar.
Blessed are You, Eternal One, in whose hand is the breath of every living thing and the spirit of all flesh.

KAVANAH

Before the alarm. Before the phone. Before the first thing anyone needed from you — something in you was already awake, already yours, already whole.

SIT WITH THIS

If you actually believed you started today clean, what would you stop carrying around?

> Name the thing you're carrying. Then finish: "I've been carrying this since _____."

04

BEFORE LEARNING

LA'ASOK B'DIVREI TORAH

לַעֲסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה

BLESSING FOR STUDY

> The verb here is la'asok — to be occupied with, to be busy with, the same word you'd use for a job. Not "read" Torah. Get your hands dirty in it.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam,

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe,

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לַעֲסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה.

asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu la'asok b'divrei Torah.

who makes us holy through the mitzvot, and calls us to immerse ourselves in words of Torah.

KAVANAH

You bless food before you eat it because it's about to become part of you. Same logic here: whatever you learn is about to become part of how you think.

SIT WITH THIS

What's something you learned this year that changed you?

> Not a fact you memorized — something you now do differently. Finish: “Before I knew this, I used to _____.”

05

SING IT TWICE

HAVA NASHIRA

הָבָה נָשִׁירָה

LET US SING

> Five words, sung as a round in three parts. The point isn't the lyrics — it's that a round only works if you hold your line while somebody else sings something different.

הָבָה נָשִׁירָה, שִׁיר הַלְלוּיָהּ.

Hava nashira, shir hal'luyah.

Come, let us sing a song of praise. Halleluyah!

KAVANAH

In a round, everyone sings the exact same melody — just starting at different times. Being out of step with each other is not a mistake in a round. It is the entire reason it sounds good.

SIT WITH THIS

Where else do you have to hold your own part while people around you are doing something different?

> Family, team, friend group, job, class. Pick one, and say what your part is when nobody's covering for you.

06

PSALM 150

MAKE NOISE

הַלְלוּיָהּ

HAL'LUYAH

> The 150th and final psalm — the last track on an album that spends 149 songs arguing, grieving, and pleading with God. After all that, it ends with a list of instruments and one instruction: make noise. The closing line says anyone who breathes is included.

הַלְלוּיָהּ. הַלְלוּ אֵל בְּקָדְשׁוֹ, הַלְלוּהוּ בִּרְקִיעַ עֻזּוֹ׃

Hal'luyah! Hal'lu El b'kodsho, hal'luhu birki'a uzo.

Halleluyah! Praise God in the sanctuary; praise God in the mighty heavens.

הַלְלוּהוּ בִגְבוּרֹתָיו, הַלְלוּהוּ כְּרֹב גֻּדְלוֹ׃

Hal'luhu vigvurotav, hal'luhu k'rov gudlo.

Praise God for mighty deeds; praise God for surpassing greatness.

הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתֵקַע שׁוֹפָר, הַלְלוּהוּ בְּנֵבֶל וְכִנּוֹר׃

Hal'luhu b'teika shofar, hal'luhu b'neivel v'chinor.

Praise God with blasts of the shofar; praise God with harp and lyre.

הַלְלוּהוּ בְתֹף וּמָחוֹל, הַלְלוּהוּ בְּמִנִּים וְעֻגָב׃

Hal'luhu b'tof umachol, hal'luhu b'minim v'ugav.

Praise God with drum and dance; praise God with strings and pipe.

הַלְלוּהוּ בְצִלְצְלֵי שָׁמַע, הַלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצְלֵי תְרוּעָה׃

Hal'luhu b'tziltz'lei shama, hal'luhu b'tziltz'lei t'ru'ah.

Praise God with resounding cymbals; praise God with clanging cymbals.

כֹּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְּהַלֵּל יָהּ, הַלְלוּיָהּ׃

Kol han'shamah t'halel Yah, hal'luyah!

Let every living soul praise Yah! Halleluyah!

KAVANAH

Ten instruments, then one instruction. Every breath you take is borrowed percussion. You were already in the band before you knew the song.

SIT WITH THIS

When was the last time you felt something so strongly you had to make a sound?

> Say what the sound actually was — a yell, a laugh, crying, one song on repeat — and what set it off.

“

SUNG AS "ELI, ELI"

אֵלִי, אֵלִי, שֶׁלֹּא יִגָּמֵר לְעוֹלָם: הַחוֹל וְהַיָּם, רִשְׁרוּשׁ שֶׁל הַמַּיִם, בְּרָק הַשָּׁמַיִם, תְּפִלַּת הָאָדָם.

My God, my God, may it never end — the sand and the sea, the ripple of the waters, the lightning in the sky, the prayer of the human heart.

HANNAH SENESH

"A Walk to Caesarea," written November 24, 1942, at age 21. She was executed by firing squad in Budapest two years later, at 23.

PART II



GATHER

One voice calls. A room answers.

07
BAR'CHU

בָּרְכוּ

THE CALL TO PRAYER

> One person calls out, everybody answers. Nothing is being explained here — this is just the moment a room full of separate people turns into one congregation.

בָּרְכוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ.

Leader: Bar'chu et Adonai ham'vorach.

Leader: Praise the Eternal One, the Source of blessing!

בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Congregation, then Leader: Baruch Adonai ham'vorach l'olam va'ed.

Congregation, then Leader: Praised be the Eternal One, the Source of blessing, now and forever!

KAVANAH

Someone calls. You answer. That is the entire technology of community, and it hasn't needed an update in three thousand years.

SIT WITH THIS

What's the difference between being in a room with people and actually being with them?

> Describe both, using one real room you were in this year. What was different about the second one?

08
YOTZER OR

LIGHT & DARK

יוֹצֵר אוֹר

CREATOR OF LIGHT

> A blessing for light — and for darkness, in the same breath. Judaism doesn't sort the world into good stuff and bad stuff and then thank God for only half of it.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, יוֹצֵר אוֹר וּבוֹרֵא חֹשֶׁךְ, עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם וּבוֹרֵא אֶת הַכֹּל.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam, yotzeir or uvorei choshech, oseh shalom uvorei et hakol.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who forms light and creates darkness, who makes peace and creates all things.

הַמֵּאִיר לָאָרֶץ וְלַדָּרִים עָלֶיהָ בְּרַחֲמִים, וּבְטוּבוֹ מְחַדֵּשׁ בְּכָל יוֹם תָּמִיד מַעֲשֵׂה בְרֵאשִׁית.

Hamei'ir la'aretz v'ladarim aleha b'rachamim, uv'tuvo m'chadeish b'chol yom tamid ma'aseih v'reishit.

In compassion You give light to the earth and all who live on it; in Your goodness You renew the work of creation every single day.

מָה רַבּוּ מַעֲשֶׂיךָ יְיָ, כֻּלָּם בְּחָכְמָה עָשִׂיתָ, מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיָנֶךָ.

Mah rabu ma'asecha Adonai, kulam b'chochmah asita, mal'ah ha'aretz kinyanecha.

How many are Your works, Eternal One! In wisdom You made them all; the earth is full of Your creations.

תִּתְבָּרַךְ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל שֶׁבַח מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ, וְעַל מְאוֹרֵי אוֹר שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ יְפָאֲרוּךָ סֶלָה.

Titbarach Adonai Eloheinu al shevach ma'aseih yadecha, v'al m'orei or she'asita y'fa'arucha selah.

Be praised, Eternal our God, for the wonder of Your handiwork, and for the lights You made. Let them glorify You. Selah.

אוֹר חָדָשׁ עַל צִיּוֹן תָּאִיר, וְנִזְכֶּה כֻלָּנוּ מְהֵרָה לְאוֹרוֹ.

Or chadash al Tziyon ta'ir, v'nizkeh chulanu m'heirah l'oro.

Shine a new light upon Zion, and may we all soon share in its brightness.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, יוֹצֵר הַמְּאוֹרוֹת.

Baruch atah Adonai, yotzeir ham'orot.

Blessed are You, Eternal One, Creator of the lights of heaven.

KAVANAH

The same hand that makes the morning made the night you got through in order to reach it.

SIT WITH THIS

What's something hard in your life that you wouldn't be who you are without?

> You don't have to be grateful for it. Just finish both halves: "It taught me _____, and it cost me _____."

09

LOVED FIRST

AHAVAH RABBAH

אַהֲבָה רַבָּה

GREAT LOVE

> Notice the order: before we declare anything about God, we say we're loved. Love comes first. The theology shows up second.

אַהֲבָה רַבָּה אֲהַבְתָּנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, חֶמְלָה גְדוֹלָה וִיתֵרָה חָמַלְתָּ עָלֵינוּ.

Ahavah rabbah ahavtanu, Adonai Eloheinu, chemlah g'dolah viteirah chamalta aleinu.

You have loved us with a great love, Eternal our God, and shown us abounding compassion.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, בַּעֲבוּר אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁבָּטְחוּ בְךָ,

Avinu Malkeinu, ba'avur avoteinu v'imoteinu shebatchu v'cha,

Our Creator, for the sake of our ancestors who trusted in You,

וַתְּלַמְּדֵם חְקֵי חַיִּים, כֵּן תְּחָנֵּנוּ וּתְלַמְּדֵנוּ.

vat'lam'deim chukei chayim, kein t'choneinu ut'lam'deinu.

and whom You taught the laws of life, be gracious to us and teach us too.

וְהָאֵר עֵינֵינוּ בְּתוֹרָתֶךָ, וְדַבֵּק לִבֵּנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ,

V'ha'eir eineinu b'Toratecha, v'dabeik libeinu b'mitzvotecha,

Open our eyes to Your Torah, help our hearts cling to Your mitzvot,

וְיַחֵד לְבָבֵנוּ לְאַהֲבָה וּלְיִרְאָה אֶת שְׁמֶךָ.

v'yacheid l'vaveinu l'ahavah ul'yir'ah et sh'mecha.

and unite our hearts to love and revere Your name.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַבּוֹחֵר בְּעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאַהֲבָה.

Baruch atah Adonai, habocheir b'amo Yisrael b'ahavah.

Blessed are You, Eternal One, who chooses the people Israel in love.

KAVANAH

Open my eyes — not so that I see more things, but so that I finally see what has been in front of me the whole time.

SIT WITH THIS

Who taught you to notice something you would have walked right past?

> Name them, and name the thing they taught you to see. Then decide whether they know.

PART III



LISTEN

Six words, and everything after them.

10
SH'MA

SIX WORDS

שְׁמַע

HEAR, O ISRAEL

> Six words. The oldest words we have. Jews have said them in every century, on every continent, in situations you cannot imagine and some you'd rather not.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד.

Sh'ma Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad.

Hear, O Israel: the Eternal is our God, the Eternal is One.

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

(whispered) Baruch shem k'vod malchuto l'olam va'ed.

(whispered) Blessed is God's glorious majesty, forever and ever.

KAVANAH

Cover your eyes and the room disappears. What's left is a voice you've heard your whole life, saying one thing: listen.

SIT WITH THIS

Sh'ma means listen. Who in your life do you need to actually listen to?

> Name the person, and name the thing you keep not hearing from them.

11
V'AHAVTA

וְאָהַבְתָּ

YOU SHALL LOVE

> The lines right after the Sh'ma are strangely specific: talk about it, write it down, tie it on, put it on your door. Judaism's answer to "how do I love God" is a to-do list.

וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ, בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדֶךָ.

V'ahavta eit Adonai Elohecha, b'chol l'vav'cha uv'chol nafsh'cha uv'chol me'odecha.

You shall love the Eternal your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.

וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם עַל לְבָבֶךָ.

V'hayu had'varim ha'eileh asher anochi m'tzav'cha hayom al l'vavecha.

Take to heart these instructions with which I charge you this day.

וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם, בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתֶךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ,

V'shinantam l'vanecha v'dibarta bam, b'shivt'cha b'veitecha uv'lecht'cha vaderech,

Impress them upon your children. Recite them when you sit at home and when you walk on the way,

וּבְשָׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמֶךָ.

uv'shochb'cha uvkumecha.

when you lie down and when you rise up.

וּקְשַׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל יָדֶךָ, וְהָיוּ לְטֹטָפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ.

Ukshartam l'ot al yadecha, v'hayu l'totafot bein einecha.

Bind them as a sign upon your hand, and let them be a symbol between your eyes.

וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתֶךָ וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ.

Uch'tavtam al m'zuzot beitecha uvish'arecha.

Inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

KAVANAH

Not a feeling — a practice. When you sit, when you walk, when you lie down, when you get up. Which is to say: all of it, all the time, starting now.

SIT WITH THIS

What do you love that you've never actually put into practice?

> Name it, then write the smallest possible version you could actually do this week.

MI CHAMOCHA → TZUR YISRAEL

מִי כָמֹכָה

WHO IS LIKE YOU? / ROCK OF ISRAEL

> This is what people sang in the first minute after they got out. Not planned, not rehearsed — the raw sound of a group realizing they're free.

מִי כָמֹכָה בָּאֵלִם יְיָ, מִי כָּמֹכָה נֶאְדָּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ,

Mi chamochah ba'eilim Adonai, mi kamochah ne'edar bakodesh,

Who is like You, Eternal One, among the gods that are worshiped? Who is like You, majestic in holiness,

נוֹרָא תְהִלֹּת עֹשֵׂה פֶלֶא.

nora t'hilot oseh fele.

awesome in splendor, working wonders?

מַלְכוּתְךָ רָאוּ בָנֶיךָ, בּוֹקֵעַ יָם לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה,

Malchut'cha ra'u vanecha, bokei'a yam lifnei Moshe,

Your children beheld Your sovereignty, the sea splitting before Moses:

זֶה אֵלִי עָנוּ וְאָמְרוּ:

zeh Eli anu v'am'ru:

“This is my God!” they answered, and said:

יְיָ יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד.

Adonai yimloch l'olam va'ed.

“The Eternal will reign forever and ever!”

צוּר יִשְׂרָאֵל, קוּמָה בְּעֶזְרַת יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּפְדֵה כִנְאֻמֶךָ יְהוּדָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל.

Tzur Yisrael, kumah b'ezrat Yisrael, ufdeih chin'umecha Yehudah v'Yisrael.

Rock of Israel, arise to Israel's help; deliver, as You promised, Judah and Israel.

גֹּאֲלֵנוּ יְיָ צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ, קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Go'aleinu Adonai tz'va'ot sh'mo, K'dosh Yisrael.

Our Redeemer, the Eternal of hosts is God's name, the Holy One of Israel.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, גָּאַל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Baruch atah Adonai, ga'al Yisrael.

Blessed are You, Eternal One, Redeemer of Israel.

KAVANAH

They were still soaked. They were still terrified. Nothing was settled and nowhere was safe yet. They sang anyway.

SIT WITH THIS

What's a moment you got through that you honestly didn't think you would?

> Two sentences: what was happening, and what the first minute afterward felt like.

PART IV

עֲמִידָה

STAND

Feet together. The rest of the year waits.

13

BEFORE YOU START

ADONAI S'FATAI

שְׂפָתַי

OPENING MY LIPS

> One quiet line before the biggest prayer in the service. It admits something honest: I'm not sure I know how to do this.

אֲדֹנָי, שְׂפָתַי תִּפְתָּח, וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתֶךָ.

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

Eternal God, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your praise.

KAVANAH

Open my lips. I'll try to take it from there.

SIT WITH THIS

What would you say if you weren't worried about saying it wrong?

> Say it wrong here. Nobody is grading the grammar, and nobody else is reading it.

14

ROLL CALL

AVOT V'IMAHOT

אָבוֹת וְאִמָּהוֹת

ANCESTORS

> A roll call of ancestors — including, in our version, the women whose names were left out for most of Jewish history. We show up here on their credit, not our own.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וֵאלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ,

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu vEilohei avoteinu v'imoteinu,

Blessed are You, Eternal our God and God of our ancestors,

אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וֵאלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב,

Elohei Avraham, Elohei Yitzchak, vEilohei Ya'akov,

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob,

אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה, אֱלֹהֵי רִבְקָה, אֱלֹהֵי רָחֵל וֵאלֹהֵי לֵאָה,

Elohei Sarah, Elohei Rivkah, Elohei Racheil vEilohei Leah,

God of Sarah, God of Rebecca, God of Rachel, and God of Leah,

הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֶלְיוֹן,

ha'Eil hagadol hagibor v'hanora, Eil elyon,

the great, mighty, and awesome God, God Most High,

גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל,

gomeil chasadim tovim v'koneih hakol,

who bestows lovingkindness and creates all things,

וְזוֹכֵר חַסְדֵי אָבוֹת וְאִמָּהוֹת, וּמֵבִיא גְּאֻלָּה לִבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם,

v'zocheir chasdei avot v'imahot, umeivi g'ulah livnei v'neihem,

who remembers the loving deeds of our ancestors and brings redemption to their children's children

לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה.

l'ma'an sh'mo b'ahavah.

for the sake of the divine name, in love.

מֶלֶךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמָגֵן.

Melech ozeir umoshi'a umagein.

You are Ruler, Helper, Savior, and Shield.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מָגֵן אַבְרָהָם וְעֶזְרַת שָׂרָה.

Baruch atah Adonai, magein Avraham v'ezrat Sarah.

Blessed are You, Eternal One, Shield of Abraham and Helper of Sarah.

KAVANAH

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah. And then, unwritten on this page: your grandmother's name. Say it into the silence.

SIT WITH THIS

Whose name belongs on your list? Who got you into this room?

> Write the names. Next to each one, put one thing they gave you that you still use.

15
ZOCHREINU

TEN DAYS ONLY

זָכְרֵנוּ

REMEMBER US FOR LIFE

> Ten days a year, we slip one extra line into the prayer. It's the shortest and most direct ask in the whole book.

זָכְרֵנוּ לְחַיִּים, מֶלֶךְ חָפֵץ בַּחַיִּים,

Zochreinu l'chayim, Melech chafeitz bachayim,

Remember us for life, Sovereign who delights in life,

וְכָתְבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים, לְמַעַנְךָ אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים.

v'chotveinu b'seifer hachayim, l'ma'ancha Elohim chayim.

and inscribe us in the Book of Life, for Your sake, O God of life.

"After all, hope is a form of planning."

GLORIA STEINEM

My Life on the Road, 2015

KAVANAH

Not: remember what I accomplished. Not: remember what I got wrong. Just — remember me. For life.

SIT WITH THIS

What do you want more time for?

> Be specific — not "friends," but which friend, doing what, where.

16
G'VUROT

REAL POWER

גְּבוּרוֹת

DIVINE POWER

> A list of what actual power looks like: holding up whoever's falling, healing whoever's sick, freeing whoever's stuck. There's not one lightning bolt on the list.

אַתָּה גִּבּוֹר לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי, מְחַיֵּה הַכֹּל אַתָּה, רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ.

Atah gibor l'olam Adonai, m'chayeih hakol atah, rav l'hoshia.

Your might, Eternal One, is eternal; You give life to all.

מְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד, מְחַיֵּה הַכֹּל בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים,

M'chalkeil chayim b'chesed, m'chayeih hakol b'rachamim rabim,

With love You sustain the living, with great compassion You give life to all,

סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים, וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים, וּמַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים,

someich noflim, v'rofei cholim, umatir asurim,

You support the falling, heal the sick, free the captive,

וּמְקַיֵּם אֱמוּנָתוֹ לִישֵׁנֵי עָפָר.

um'kayeim emunato lisheinei afar.

and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust.

מִי כָמוֹךָ בַּעַל גְּבוּרוֹת וּמִי דּוֹמֶה לָּךְ,

Mi chamocha ba'al g'vurot umi domeh lach,

Who is like You, Source of mighty deeds? Who resembles You,

מֶלֶךְ מֵמִית וּמְחַיֶּה וּמַצְמִיחַ יְשׁוּעָה.

Melech meimit um'chayeh umatzmi'ach y'shuah.

Sovereign of life and death, source of salvation?

מִי כָמוֹךָ אַב הָרַחֲמִים, זוֹכֵר יְצוּרָיו לְחַיִּים בְּרַחֲמִים.

Mi chamocha av harachamim, zocheir y'tzurav l'chayim b'rachamim.

Who is like You, Source of compassion, who remembers all creatures for life, mercifully.

וְנֶאֱמָן אַתָּה לְהַחֲיוֹת הַכֹּל.

V'ne'eman atah l'hachayot hakol.

You are faithful in giving life to all.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מְחַיֵּה הַכֹּל.

Baruch atah Adonai, m'chayeih hakol.

Blessed are You, Eternal One, who gives life to all.

KAVANAH

Strength gets measured in who is still standing because you were there.

SIT WITH THIS

Where in your life do you genuinely have power — and what are you doing with it?

> Younger sibling, group chat, team, lunch table, classroom. Pick one and finish: "I could use it to _____."

17

STAND ON YOUR TOES

K'DUSHAH

קְדֻשָּׁה

SANCTIFICATION

> We're quoting angels here. The choreography — up on your toes, three times — is what's left of an old attempt to sound like them.

נְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת שִׁמְךָ בָּעוֹלָם, כְּשֵׁם שֶׁמַּקְדִּישִׁים אוֹתוֹ בִּשְׁמֵי מָרוֹם,

N'kadeish et shimcha ba'olam, k'sheim shemakdishim oto bishmei marom,

We sanctify Your name on earth, as it is sanctified in the heavens above,

כַּכָּתוּב עַל יַד נְבִיאֶךָ: וְקָרָא זֶה אֶל זֶה וְאָמַר,

kakatuv al yad n'vi'echa: v'kara zeh el zeh v'amar,

as it is written by Your prophet: they called to one another and said,

קָדוֹשׁ, קָדוֹשׁ, קָדוֹשׁ יְיָ צְבָאוֹת, מְלֹא כָל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ.

Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh Adonai tz'va'ot, m'lo chol ha'aretz k'vodo.

“Holy, holy, holy is the Eternal of hosts! The whole earth is full of God's glory!”

לְעֻמָּתָם בָּרוּךְ יֹאמֵרוּ: בָּרוּךְ כְּבוֹד יְיָ מִמְּקוֹמוֹ.

L'umatam baruch yomeiru: Baruch k'vod Adonai mim'komo.

Those facing them say “Blessed”: “Blessed is the Eternal's glory from this and every place.”

וּבְדִבְרֵי קָדְשְׁךָ כָּתוּב לֵאמֹר:

Uv'divrei kodsh'cha katuv leimor:

And in Your holy words it is written:

יִמְלֹךְ יְיָ לְעוֹלָם, אֱלֹהַיִךְ צִיּוֹן, לְדֹר וָדֹר, הַלְלוּיָהּ.

Yimloch Adonai l'olam, Elohayich Tziyon, l'dor vador, hal'luyah.

“The Eternal shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, from generation to generation. Halleluyah!”

לְדוֹר וָדוֹר נַגִּיד גָּדְלֶךָ וּלְנֵצַח נְצָחִים קְדֻשָּׁתְךָ נַקְדִּישׁ,

L'dor vador nagid godlecha ul'neitzach n'tzachim k'dushat'cha nakdish,

Through all generations we will declare Your greatness, and for all eternity proclaim Your holiness.

וְשִׁבְחֲךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִפִּינוּ לֹא יָמוּשׁ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד,

v'shivchacha Eloheinu mipinu lo yamush l'olam va'ed,

Your praise, our God, shall never leave our lips, forever and ever,

כִּי אֵל מֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל וְקָדוֹשׁ אָתָּה. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ.

ki Eil Melech gadol v'kadosh atah. Baruch atah Adonai, ha'Eil hakadosh.

for You, God, are a great and holy Ruler. Blessed are You, Eternal One, the Holy God.

KAVANAH

Holy, holy, holy — and then: the whole earth is full of it. Not only up there. Here. This room. This floor you're standing on.

SIT WITH THIS

When did you last feel small in a way that felt good?

> Where were you, and what were you looking at when it happened?

18

THE HEAVY ONE

UN'TANEH TOKEF

וּנְתַנֶּה תֹּקֶף

LET US SPEAK OF THE AWESOMENESS OF THIS DAY

> The most intense poem in the machzor, written by someone who knew how fragile everything is. Then comes the famous line: a great shofar sounds — and a still, small voice is heard. The loudest instrument we have and the quietest thing there is, in the same sentence.

וּנְתַנֶּה תֹּקֶף קְדֻשַּׁת הַיּוֹם, כִּי הוּא נוֹרָא וְאָיוֹם.

Un'taneh tokef k'dushat hayom, ki hu nora v'ayom.

Let us speak of the utter sanctity of this day, for it is awesome and full of dread.

וּבוֹ תִנָּשֵׂא מַלְכוּתֶךָ, וְיִכּוֹן בְּחֶסֶד כִּסְאֶךָ, וְתֵשֵׁב עָלָיו בֶּאֱמֶת.

Uvo tinasei malchutecha, v'yikon b'chesed kis'echa, v'teisheiv alav be'emet.

On it Your dominion is exalted; Your throne is established in love, and You occupy it in truth.

אֱמֶת כִּי אַתָּה הוּא דַּיָּן וּמוֹכִיחַ וְיוֹדֵעַ וָעֵד,

Emet ki atah hu dayan umochiach v'yodeia va'eid,

It is true that You alone are judge and arbiter, who knows and witnesses all,

וְכוֹתֵב וְחוֹתֵם וְסוֹפֵר וּמוֹנֶה, וְתִזְכֹּר כָּל הַנִּשְׁכָּחוֹת.

v'choteiv v'chotem v'sofeir umoneh, v'tizkor kol hanishkachot.

who writes and seals, records and counts, and remembers all that is forgotten.

וְתִפְתַּח אֶת סֵפֶר הַזִּכְרוֹנוֹת, וּמֵאֵלָיו יִקָּרֵא, וְחוֹתָם יַד כָּל אָדָם בּוֹ.

V'tiftach et seifer hazichronot, umei'eilav yikarei, v'chotam yad kol adam bo.

You open the Book of Remembrance, and it speaks for itself, for every person has signed it with their deeds.

וּבְשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל יִתָּקַע, וְקוֹל דְּמָמָה דַקָּה יִשָּׁמַע.

Uv'shofar gadol yitaka, v'kol d'mamah dakah yishama.

The great shofar is sounded, and a still, small voice is heard.

KAVANAH

The book is open. The unsettling part isn't who's writing it. It's that the handwriting is yours.

SIT WITH THIS

What's the quiet thing you can only hear when everything else finally stops?

> Put everything down for thirty actual seconds first. Then write whatever showed up.

19

THE HARD PAGE

B'ROSH HASHANAH

בְּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה

ON ROSH HASHANAH IT IS WRITTEN

> This page lists everything that could happen to a person in a year. It doesn't promise it won't. It just refuses to look away — and it makes us not look away together, out loud, in a room.

בְּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה יִכָּתֵבוּן, וּבְיוֹם צוֹם כִּפּוּר יֵחָתֵמוּן:

B'rosh hashanah yikateivun, uv'yom tzom kipur yeichateimun:

On Rosh Hashanah it is written, on the Fast Day of Yom Kippur it is sealed:

כַּמָּה יַעַבְרוּן וְכַמָּה יִבָּרֵאוּן, מִי יִחְיֶה וּמִי יָמוּת,

kamah ya'avrun v'chamah yibarei'un, mi yichyeh umi yamut,

how many shall pass on, how many shall be born; who shall live and who shall die;

מִי בְקִצּוֹ וּמִי לֹא בְקִצּוֹ, מִי בַמַּיִם וּמִי בָאֵשׁ,

mi v'kitzo umi lo v'kitzo, mi vamayim umi va'eish,

who in the fullness of years and who before; who by water and who by fire;

מִי בַחֶרֶב וּמִי בַחַיָּה, מִי בָרָעָב וּמִי בַצָּמָא,

mi vacherev umi vachayah, mi varaav umi vatzama,

who by sword and who by beast; who by hunger and who by thirst;

מִי בָרַעַשׁ וּמִי בַמַּגֵּפָה, מִי בַחֲנִיקָה וּמִי בַסְּקִילָה,

mi vara'ash umi vamageifah, mi vachanikah umi vas'kilah,

who by earthquake and who by plague; who by strangling and who by stoning;

מִי יָנוּחַ וּמִי יָנוּעַ, מִי יִשָּׁקֵט וּמִי יִטָּרֵף,

mi yanuach umi yanua, mi yishakeit umi yitareif,

who shall be at rest and who shall wander; who shall be tranquil and who shall be troubled;

מִי יִשָּׁלֵו וּמִי יִתְיַסָּר, מִי יֵעָנִי וּמִי יֵעָשֵׁר,

mi yishaleiv umi yityasar, mi yei'ani umi yei'asheir,

who shall be at ease and who afflicted; who shall become poor and who shall become rich;

מִי יִשָּׁפֵל וּמִי יָרוּם.

mi yishafeil umi yarum.

who shall be brought low and who shall be raised up.

KAVANAH

We don't say this because it's comforting. We say it because it's true, and because nobody should have to say it alone.

SIT WITH THIS

What are you actually afraid of this year? Nobody reads this page but you.

> Write the real one, not the acceptable one. This page has no audience.

20
UT'SHUVAH

וּתְשׁוּבָה

REPENTANCE, PRAYER, AND RIGHTEOUS GIVING

> The response to that terrifying list isn't "God will fix it." It's three verbs: turn, pray, give. Ordinary things you could start doing by Thursday.

וּתְשׁוּבָה וּתְפִלָּה וּצְדָקָה מַעֲבִירִין אֶת רֹעַ הַגְּזֵרָה.

Ut'shuvah, ut'filah, utz'dakah ma'avirin et ro'a hag'zeirah.

But repentance, prayer, and righteous giving temper the harshness of the decree.

כִּי כְשִׁמְךָ כֵּן תְּהִלָּתֶךָ, קָשֶׁה לִכְעֹס וְנוֹחַ לִרְצוֹת,

Ki k'shimcha kein t'hilatecha, kasheh lich'os v'noach lirtzot,

For as Your name is, so is Your praise: slow to anger, easy to appease,

כִּי לֹא תַחְפֹּץ בְּמוֹת הַמֵּת, כִּי אִם בְּשׁוּבוֹ מִדַּרְכּוֹ וְחָיָה.

ki lo tachpotz b'mot hameit, ki im b'shuvo midarko v'chayah.

for You do not want the sinner's death, but that they turn from their path and live.

וְעַד יוֹם מוֹתוֹ תְּחַכֶּה לוֹ, אִם יָשׁוּב מִיַּד תְּקַבְּלוֹ.

V'ad yom moto t'chakeh lo, im yashuv miyad t'kably'lo.

Until the day of death You wait for them; if they return, You receive them at once.

KAVANAH

You can't control the year. You can control what you do on a Tuesday. That turns out to be most of it.

SIT WITH THIS

Name one relationship you could turn back toward this year.

> Name the person. Then write the first sentence you would have to say to them.

“

ON PRAYER THAT MOVES

Even without words, our march was worship. I felt my legs were praying.

RABBI ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

Written after marching from Selma to Montgomery with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 1965

21

BEFORE THE BLAST

ROSH HASHANAH

SHOFAR / SH'HECHEYANU

שׁוֹפָר

BLESSINGS BEFORE SOUNDING THE SHOFAR

> Two blessings before the oldest sound in Judaism: one for the mitzvah of hearing it, and one for the plain fact that you made it to this moment at all.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam,

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe,

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לִשְׁמֹעַ קוֹל שׁוֹפָר.

asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu lishmo'a kol shofar.

who makes us holy through the mitzvot, and commands us to hear the sound of the shofar.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam,

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe,

שֶׁהֶחֱיָנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higianu lazman hazeh.

who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

KAVANAH

Sh'hecheyanu is the blessing for firsts, for survivals, for anything you almost missed. Say it like you mean it, because you did make it.

SIT WITH THIS

What did it take for you to get into this room this year?

> Count the people involved — rides, reminders, someone who noticed you were struggling. Name at least two.

22

FOUR SOUNDS

ROSH HASHANAH

SHOFAR CALLS

תְּקִיעָה

T'KIAH, SH'VARIM, T'RUAH, T'KIAH G'DOLAH

> Four blasts, and together they're an emotional sequence: one whole sound, a broken one, a shattered one — and then whole again, held far longer than seems possible.

תְּקִיעָה

T'kiah

One long, unbroken blast.

שְׁבָרִים

Sh'varim

Three medium, broken or wavering blasts.

תְּרוּעָה

T'ruah

Nine or more short, staccato blasts.

תְּקִיעָה גְּדוֹלָה

T'kiah g'dolah

One long blast, held as long as possible, closing the set.

הַיּוֹם הֲרַת עוֹלָם, הַיּוֹם יַעֲמִיד בַּמִּשְׁפָּט כָּל יְצוּרֵי עוֹלָמִים.

Hayom harat olam, hayom ya'amid bamishpat kol y'tzurei olamim.

Today the world is born anew; today all creation stands in judgment.

KAVANAH

T'kiah: whole. Sh'varim: cracked. T'ruah: in pieces. T'kiah G'dolah: whole again, and louder than before.

SIT WITH THIS

Which one are you this year?

> Pick one and say why. If you're more than one, say which came first this year.

23
Y'VARECH'CHA

יְבָרֶכְךָ

THE PRIESTLY BLESSING

> The oldest biblical text ever found — archaeologists dug these exact words out of Jerusalem on silver scrolls from around 600 BCE. People have been saying them over people they love for that long.

יְבָרֶכְךָ יְיָ וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ.

Y'varech'cha Adonai v'yishm'recha.
May the Eternal bless you and protect you.

יָאֵר יְיָ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ.

Ya'eir Adonai panav eilecha vichuneka.
May the Eternal deal kindly and graciously with you.

יִשָּׂא יְיָ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם.

Yisa Adonai panav eilecha v'yaseim l'cha shalom.
May the Eternal bestow favor upon you and grant you peace.

KAVANAH

May you be protected. May you be seen. May you have peace. Three lines. Nothing else required.

SIT WITH THIS

Who needs a blessing from you?

> Write their name, then write the blessing in your own words. Three lines, like the original.

24

SIM SHALOM

LAST ASK

שָׁלוֹם רָב

GRANT PEACE

> After everything else we've asked for, the final request is peace. Not winning. Not being proven right. Peace.

שָׁלוֹם רָב עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְּךָ תָּשִׂים לְעוֹלָם,

Shalom rav al Yisrael am'cha tasim l'olam,

Grant abundant and lasting peace to Your people Israel,

כִּי אַתָּה הוּא מֶלֶךְ אָדוֹן לְכָל הַשָּׁלוֹם.

ki atah hu Melech Adon l'chol hashalom.

for You are the Sovereign Source of all peace.

וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל עֵת וּבְכָל שָׁעָה בִּשְׁלוֹמֶךָ.

V'tov b'einecha l'vareich et am'cha Yisrael b'chol eit uv'chol sha'ah bishlomecha.

May it please You to bless Your people Israel in every season and in every hour with Your peace.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַמְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּשָּׁלוֹם.

Baruch atah Adonai, ham'vareich et amo Yisrael bashalom.

Blessed are You, Eternal One, who blesses the people Israel with peace.

KAVANAH

Shalom doesn't mean quiet. It comes from a word meaning whole — nothing missing, nothing at war with itself.

SIT WITH THIS

Where do you need peace — with someone else, or with yourself?

> Name it, then finish: “Peace here would mean I could finally _____.”

PART V

לְבַד

ALONE

No page number can help you here.

25
SILENT MEDITATION

YOUR PART

תְּפִלַּת הַלֵּב

PERSONAL PRAYER

> The room goes quiet. This is the one part nobody can do for you — no leader, no page number, no melody to hide inside.

יִהְיוּ לְרָצוֹן אִמְרֵי פִי וְהֶגְיוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ,

Yihyu l'ratzon imrei fi v'hegyon libi l'fanecha,

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to You,

יְיָ צוּרִי וְגוֹאֲלִי.

Adonai tzuri v'go'ali.

Eternal One, my Rock and my Redeemer.

KAVANAH

May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart both be acceptable — a prayer that quietly admits those two aren't always the same thing.

SIT WITH THIS

Write whatever's actually on your mind. Not the version you'd say out loud.

> If nothing comes, write “I don't know what to write” until something does. That genuinely works.

26

GUARD MY MOUTH

ELOHAI N'TZOR

אֱלֹהַי נְצֹר

MY GOD, GUARD MY TONGUE

> The private prayer at the end of the Amidah, and it's about your mouth. Not war, not money, not enemies — the damage a person can do with one sentence.

אֱלֹהַי, נְצֹר לְשׁוֹנִי מֵרָע, וּשְׂפָתַי מִדַּבֵּר מִרְמָה,

Elohai, n'tzor l'shoni meira, us'fatai midabeir mirmah,

My God, guard my tongue from evil, and my lips from speaking falsely.

וְלִמְקַלְלַי נַפְשִׁי תִדֹּם, וְנַפְשִׁי כֶּעָפָר לַכֹּל תִּהְיֶה.

v'limkal'lai nafshi tidom, v'nafshi ke'afar lakol tihyeh.

Help me stay silent before those who curse me; let me be humble before all.

פְּתַח לִבִּי בְּתוֹרָתֶךָ, וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ תִּרְדֹּף נַפְשִׁי.

P'tach libi b'Toratecha, uv'mitzvotecha tirdof nafshi.

Open my heart to Your Torah, and let my soul pursue Your mitzvot.

וְכֹל הַחוֹשְׁבִים עָלַי רָעָה, מְהֵרָה הָפֵר עֲצָתָם וְקַלְקֵל מַחֲשַׁבְתָּם.

V'chol hachosh'vim alai ra'ah, m'heirah hafeir atzatam v'kalkeil machashavtam.

As for all who plan evil against me, swiftly frustrate their plans and confound their designs.

עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן יְמִינֶךָ, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן תּוֹרָתֶךָ,

Aseih l'ma'an sh'mecha, aseih l'ma'an y'minecha, aseih l'ma'an Toratecha,

Act for the sake of Your name; act for the sake of Your power; act for the sake of Your holiness; act for the sake of Your Torah,

עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן קְדֻשָּׁתֶךָ, לְמַעַן יֵחָלְצוּן יְדִידֶיךָ, הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינְךָ וַעֲנֵנִי.

aseih l'ma'an k'dushatecha, l'ma'an yeichaltzun y'didecha, hoshiah y'min'cha va'aneini.

so that those who love You may be rescued; save with Your power, and answer me.

עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

Oseh shalom bimromav, hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu v'al kol Yisrael, v'imru amein.

May the One who makes peace in the heavens make peace for us and for all Israel, and let us say: Amen.

KAVANAH

Guard my tongue. Open my heart. In that order, because the first one is harder.

SIT WITH THIS

What's one thing you said this year that you'd take back?

> Write what you actually said. Then write what you'd say instead.

THE HONEST LIST

> Jews have done this for centuries: sit down once a year and take an actual inventory. Not a guilt spiral — an audit. Be specific. Nobody reads this but you.

Someone I owe an apology:

Something I'd do differently:

Something I got right that I never gave myself credit for:

Someone I need to forgive — possibly myself:

One thing I'm letting go of before next year:

PART VI



OPEN

The doors open. So does the ask.

27
OPENING THE ARK

DOORS OPEN

פְּתִיחַת הָאָרוֹן

VAY'HI BIN'SOA / KI MITZION

> Everyone stands. The doors open. Whatever you do or don't believe, something shifts in a room when it opens.

וַיְהִי בִּנְסֹעַ הָאָרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה: קוּמָה יְיָ וְיָפֻצוּ אֹיְבֶיךָ, וְיָנֻסוּ מְשַׂנְאֶיךָ מִפָּנֶיךָ.

Vay'hi bin'soa ha'aron vayomer Moshe: Kumah Adonai v'yafutzu oy'vecha, v'yanusu m'sanecha mipanecha.

Whenever the Ark set out, Moses would say: Arise, Eternal One, and let Your enemies be scattered; let those who hate You flee before You.

כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה, וּדְבַר יְיָ מִירוּשָׁלָיִם.

Ki mitziyon teitzei Torah, ud'var Adonai mirushalayim.

For instruction shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Eternal from Jerusalem.

KAVANAH

The ark opens the way a door opens when someone has been waiting up for you.

SIT WITH THIS

If you had thirty seconds while the doors were open, what would you say?

> Write it as real words, the way you'd say them out loud — not a summary of them.

28

THE ASK

AVINU MALKEINU

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ

OUR CREATOR, OUR RULER

> A long list of requests, set to a melody most people know by heart before they know what the words mean. It ends by admitting we haven't earned any of it.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, חָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ.

Avinu Malkeinu, chatanu l'fanecha.

Our Creator, our Ruler, we have sinned before You.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֶלָּא אָתָּה.

Avinu Malkeinu, ein lanu Melech ela atah.

Our Creator, our Ruler, we have no ruler but You.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ.

Avinu Malkeinu, aseih imanu l'ma'an sh'mecha.

Our Creator, our Ruler, act on our behalf for the sake of Your name.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, חַדֵּשׁ עָלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה.

Avinu Malkeinu, chadeish aleinu shanah tovah.

Our Creator, our Ruler, renew for us a good year.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, כָּתְבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר חַיִּים טוֹבִים.

Avinu Malkeinu, kotveinu b'seifer chayim tovim.

Our Creator, our Ruler, inscribe us for a good life.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, כָּתְבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר גְּאֻלָּה וִישׁוּעָה.

Avinu Malkeinu, kotveinu b'seifer g'ulah vishuah.

Our Creator, our Ruler, inscribe us for redemption and salvation.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, כָּתְבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר פַּרְנָסָה וְכַלְכָּלָה.

Avinu Malkeinu, kotveinu b'seifer parnasah v'chalkalah.

Our Creator, our Ruler, inscribe us for sustenance and prosperity.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, שְׁלַח רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה לְחוֹלֵי עַמֶּךָ.

Avinu Malkeinu, sh'lach r'fuah sh'leimah l'cholei amecha.

Our Creator, our Ruler, send complete healing to the sick of Your people.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, חָנֵּנוּ וַעֲנֵנוּ כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים,

Avinu Malkeinu, choneinu va'aneinu ki ein banu ma'asim,

Our Creator, our Ruler, be gracious and answer us, for we have little merit;

עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וָחֶסֶד וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

aseih imanu tz'dakah vachesed v'hoshieinu.

deal with us in charity and lovingkindness, and save us.

KAVANAH

We have no case to make and no argument prepared. Only a melody, and the nerve to ask anyway.

SIT WITH THIS

What are you asking for this year — honestly, not the polite version?

> Write the polite version first if you need to. Then cross it out and write the real one underneath.

29

STILL BEING GIVEN

TORAH BLESSINGS

בִּרְכוֹת הַתּוֹרָה

TORAH STUDY

> Look closely at the verb. Not "who gave us the Torah," past tense, done. Who gives. Present tense. Apparently it's still being handed over. Right now, in this room.

בָּרְכוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ. / בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Before: Bar'chu et Adonai ham'vorach. / Baruch Adonai ham'vorach l'olam va'ed.

Before: Praise the Eternal One, the Source of blessing! / Blessed is the Eternal One, the Source of blessing, forever and ever!

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher bachar banu mikol ha'amim v'natan lanu et Torato.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who has chosen us from among all peoples by giving us the Torah.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

Baruch atah Adonai, notein haTorah.

Blessed are You, Eternal One, Giver of the Torah.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת,

After: Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher natan lanu Torat emet,

After: Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who has given us a Torah of truth,

וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

v'chayei olam nata b'tocheinu. Baruch atah Adonai, notein haTorah.

planting within us eternal life. Blessed are You, Eternal One, Giver of the Torah.

"Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."

JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG
Radcliffe Medal address, May 29, 2015

KAVANAH

Eternal life planted inside us — not a reward waiting somewhere later. A seed, already in the ground.

SIT WITH THIS

What's a question you'd actually want this book to answer?

> Not a trivia question. Something you'd genuinely want to know if the book could answer back.

30

THE HARD STORY

ROSH HASHANAH

TORAH READING — ROSH HASHANAH

עֲקֵדַת יִצְחָק

THE BINDING OF ISAAC

> The most disturbing story in the Torah, read on the happiest day of the year. Nobody has ever fully explained why. Read it and see what you think Abraham should have done.

Genesis 22:1–19 · Some congregations read Genesis 21:1–21 instead

WHAT HAPPENS

God tells Abraham to take his son Isaac up a mountain and offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham says nothing, saddles the donkey, and goes. At the last possible second an angel stops him, and a ram appears in the thicket. Father and son come down the mountain — but the text never shows them speaking to each other again.

KAVANAH

The traditional reason we blow a ram's horn: to remember the ram that showed up so the boy didn't have to.

SIT WITH THIS

Was Abraham right to go? Write your actual answer, not the one you think you're supposed to give.

> Answer yes or no, then defend it in three sentences. Then argue the other side in one.

31

SHE INVENTED THIS

ROSH HASHANAH

HAFTARAH — ROSH HASHANAH

תְּפִלַּת חַנָּה

HANNAH'S PRAYER

> Almost everything about how we pray — silent, personal, lips moving without sound — traces back to one woman who was so upset that a priest thought she was drunk.

1 Samuel 1:1–2:10

WHAT HAPPENS

Hannah desperately wants a child. She goes to the sanctuary and prays so intensely — moving her lips with no sound coming out — that the priest Eli assumes she's drunk and tells her off. She isn't. She's praying. Her answer to him becomes the model for how Jews pray to this day: silently, from the heart.

KAVANAH

She was misread by the person whose whole job was understanding prayer. She kept praying anyway.

SIT WITH THIS

When have you been misread by someone who should have known better?

> What did they think was going on, and what was actually going on?

32

NOT IN HEAVEN

YOM KIPPUR

TORAH READING — YOM KIPPUR

נִצָּבִים

CHOOSE LIFE

> Reform congregations read this on Yom Kippur morning instead of the ancient scapegoat ritual. It's a speech about the fact that you already know what to do, and that the choice is genuinely yours.

Deuteronomy 29:9–14; 30:11–20 · Nitzavim

WHAT HAPPENS

Moses gathers the entire people — leaders and woodcutters, women and children, the stranger in the camp — and tells them the covenant is being made with all of them, including those not standing there that day. Then he says this instruction is not in heaven and not across the sea; it is very close to you. He lays out life and death, blessing and curse, and says: choose life.

KAVANAH

Lo bashamayim hi — it is not in heaven. Whatever you're waiting for permission on, the permission already came.

SIT WITH THIS

"Choose life" is an instruction, not a feeling. What's one choice this week that would count?

> Name the day and the choice. Vague plans do not survive until Tuesday.

33

CALLED OUT
YOM KIPPUR

HAFTARAH — YOM KIPPUR

הֲכָזֶה יִהְיֶה צוֹם

IS THIS THE FAST I WANT?

> The single most confrontational text in the machzor — read on the day everyone is fasting, and it says the fasting is not the point. Isaiah is not subtle.

Isaiah 58:1–14

WHAT HAPPENS

God, through Isaiah, looks at people fasting and interrupts: this is not the fast I asked for. Not bowing your head like a reed, not sackcloth and ashes. The fast God wants is to unlock the chains of injustice, let the oppressed go free, share your bread with the hungry, bring the homeless poor into your house, and clothe the naked when you see them.

KAVANAH

You can go the whole day without food and still miss it entirely. The prophet says so out loud, in the middle of the service, to your face.

SIT WITH THIS

What would it look like to take Isaiah literally this year?

> Pick one item off Isaiah's list — feed someone, free someone, house someone — and shrink it until it's something you could actually do.

34

SAY THE NAME

MI SHEBEIRACH

מִי שֶׁבֵּרַךְ

PRAYER FOR HEALING

> The prayer where people say names out loud — sometimes a grandparent, sometimes a friend, sometimes their own. Note what it asks for: r'fuat hanefesh before r'fuat haguf. Healing of spirit gets named first.

מִי שֶׁבֵּרַךְ אִמּוֹתֵינוּ, שָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה,

Mi shebeirach imoteinu, Sarah Rivkah Racheil v'Leah,

May the One who blessed our mothers — Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah —

וַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ, אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב,

va'avoteinu, Avraham Yitzchak v'Ya'akov,

and our fathers — Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob —

הוּא יְבָרֵךְ וִירַפֵּא אֶת הַחוֹלִים.

hu y'vareich virapei et hacholim.

bless and heal all who are ill.

הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא יִמְלָא רַחֲמִים עֲלֵיהֶם,

HaKadosh Baruch Hu yimalei rachamim aleihem,

May the Holy One be filled with compassion for them,

לְהַחֲלִימָם וּלְרַפְּאֹתָם, לְהַחֲזִיקָם וּלְהַחֲיוֹתָם,

l'hachalimam ul'rap'otam, l'hachazikam ul'hachayotam,

restoring them, strengthening them, and giving them life,

וְיִשְׁלַח לָהֶם מְהֵרָה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה,

v'yishlach lahem m'heirah r'fuah sh'leimah,

and send them speedily a complete healing:

רְפוּאַת הַנֶּפֶשׁ וּרְפוּאַת הַגּוּף. וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן.

r'fuat hanefesh ur'fuat haguf. V'nomar: Amen.

healing of spirit and healing of body. And let us say: Amen.

KAVANAH

Not everyone gets better. The prayer knows that. It asks for healing anyway, and it asks for the kind that's still possible when a cure isn't.

SIT WITH THIS

Whose name are you carrying into this room today?

> Write the names. Then write one thing you could do for one of them this week.

“

ON WHAT HEALING ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE

It feels impossible to imagine that we can ever stitch ourselves back together, but we can. And in some ways, it becomes even more beautiful than it was before, because now it holds the history of the struggle and of the process of healing.

RABBI SHARON BROUS

Author of The Amen Effect, interviewed by Religion News Service, 2024

FOR THE MI SHEBEIRACH

NAMES I'M CARRYING

People who are sick, struggling, or just on your mind. Write them here so you have them when the room goes quiet and names are said out loud.

35
EITZ CHAYIM HI

עֵץ חַיִּים הִיא

A TREE OF LIFE

> Sung while the Torah goes back in the ark. Notice the Torah is a "she" here, and notice the last line — the same word for turning that runs through these whole ten days.

עֵץ חַיִּים הִיא לַמַּחֲזִיקִים בָּהּ, וְתֹמְכֶיהָ מְאֻשָּׁר.

Eitz chayim hi lamachazikim bah, v'tom'cheha m'ushar.

She is a tree of life to those who hold fast to her, and all who hold her are made happy.

דְּרָכֶיהָ דַרְכֵי נֹעַם, וְכָל נְתִיבוֹתֶיהָ שָׁלוֹם.

D'racheha darchei noam, v'chol n'tivoteha shalom.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

הֲשִׁיבֵנוּ יְיָ אֵלֶיךָ וְנָשׁוּבָה, חַדֵּשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם.

Hashiveinu Adonai eilecha v'nashuvah, chadeish yameinu k'kedem.

Turn us back to You, Eternal One, and we shall return; make our days new, as they were before.

KAVANAH

A tree, not a monument. Something that keeps growing, drops things, survives winters, and is worth holding onto.

SIT WITH THIS

What's worth holding onto that you almost let go of this year?

> Name it, and name what almost took it from you.

תְּקִיעָה גְּדוֹלָה

T'KIAH G'DOLAH

One last blast. Hold it as long as you can — then a little longer than that.

T'KIAH	One whole sound.
SH'VARIM	Three broken ones.
T'RUAH	Nine in pieces.
T'KIAH G'DOLAH	Whole again, and louder.

PART VII



GO

Whole again, and louder.

36

ALEINU

BOW, THEN STAND

עָלֵינוּ

IT IS OUR DUTY TO PRAISE

> We bow here — one of the only times all year. Then the prayer pivots hard, from "we're grateful" to "the world isn't finished." The phrase l'takein olam, to repair the world, lives in this paragraph.

עָלֵינוּ לְשַׁבֵּחַ לַאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל, לָתֵת גְּדֻלָּה לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית,

Aleinu l'shabei'ach la'adon hakol, lateit g'dulah l'yotzeir b'reishit,

It is our duty to praise the Ruler of all, to acclaim the Creator,

שֶׁהוּא נוֹטֶה שָׁמַיִם וְיוֹסֵד אָרֶץ, וּמוֹשַׁב יְקָרוֹ בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל,

shehu noteh shamayim v'yoseid aretz, umoshav y'karo bashamayim mima'al,

who stretched out the heavens and established the earth, whose glory is revealed in the heavens above,

וּשְׁכִינַת עֻזּוֹ בְּגָבְהֵי מְרוֹמִים. הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֵין עוֹד.

ush'chinat uzo b'govhei m'romim. Hu Eloheinu, ein od.

and whose majesty is in the loftiest heights. This is our God; there is none else.

וַאֲנַחְנוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים, לִפְנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא.

Va'anachnu kor'im umishtachavim umodim, lifnei Melech malchei ham'lachim, HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

And so we bend the knee, bow, and give thanks, before the Ruler who rules over all rulers, the Holy One, Blessed be God.

עַל כֵּן נְקַוֶּה לְךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, לִרְאוֹת מְהֵרָה בְּתִפְאֶרֶת עֻזֶּךָ,

Al kein n'kaveh l'cha Adonai Eloheinu, lirot m'heirah b'tiferet uzecha,

Therefore we hope in You, Eternal our God, soon to see the glory of Your power,

לְהַעֲבִיר גִּלּוּלִים מִן הָאָרֶץ, וְהָאֱלִילִים כָּרוֹת יִכָּרֵתוּן,

l'ha'avir gilulim min ha'aretz, veha'elilim karot yikareitun,

when idols will be removed from the earth and false gods utterly destroyed,

לְתַקֵּן עוֹלָם בְּמַלְכוּת שַׁדַּי. וְכָל בְּנֵי בָשָׂר יִקְרְאוּ בִשְׁמֶךָ,

l'takein olam b'malchut Shadai. V'chol b'nei vasar yikr'u vishmecha,

when the world will be perfected under God's sovereignty, and all humanity will call upon Your name,

לְהַפְנוֹת אֵלֶיךָ כָּל רִשְׁעֵי אָרֶץ. יַכִּירוּ וְיֵדְעוּ כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל,

l'hafnot eilecha kol rish'ei aretz. Yakiru v'yeidu kol yosh'vei teiveil,

when all the wicked of the earth will turn toward You. Let all who dwell on earth acknowledge and know

כִּי לְךָ תִכְרַע כָּל בֶּרֶךְ, תִּשָּׁבַע כָּל לָשׁוֹן.

ki l'cha tichra kol berech, tishava kol lashon.

that to You every knee must bend, every tongue swear loyalty.

וְנֶאֱמַר: וְהָיָה יְיָ לְמֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ,

V'ne'emar: v'hayah Adonai l'melech al kol ha'aretz,

And it is said: the Eternal will be Ruler over all the earth;

בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה יְיָ אֶחָד וּשְׁמוֹ אֶחָד.

bayom hahu yihyeh Adonai echad ush'mo echad.

on that day the Eternal will be One, and God's name will be One.

KAVANAH

Bow because you're small. Stand back up because there's work, and some of it is yours.

SIT WITH THIS

What's one piece of the world you're actually positioned to fix?

> Not world hunger. Something in your school, your house, or your group chat — specific enough that someone could check whether you did it.

“

ON WHAT HE LEARNED IN BERLIN

The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is silence.

RABBI JOACHIM PRINZ

Speaking immediately before Dr. King at the March on Washington, August 28, 1963. He had been a rabbi in Berlin under the Nazis.

37

NEVER SAYS DEATH

MOURNER'S KADDISH

קַדִּישׁ יָתוֹם

KADDISH YATOM

> The prayer for the dead never once mentions death. Not a single word about it. It's entirely praise and a wish for peace. Mourners stand, and everyone else answers amen — so that nobody says it alone.

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא, בְּעָלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כִרְעוּתֵהּ,

Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'meih raba, b'alma di v'ra chirutei,

Exalted and hallowed be God's great name, in the world which God created according to plan.

וְיַמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתֵהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,

v'yamlich malchutei b'chayeichon uv'yomeichon uv'chayei d'chol beit Yisrael,

May God's majesty be revealed in the days of your lifetime and in the life of all Israel,

בַּעֲגָלָא וּבִזְמַן קָרִיב, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

ba'agala uvizman kariv, v'imru amein.

speedily, imminently, and let us say: Amen.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלַם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא.

Y'hei sh'meih raba m'varach l'alam ul'almei almaya.

May God's great name be blessed forever and ever.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאַר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדַּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלַּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא,

Yitbarach v'yishtabach v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam v'yitnasei v'yit'hadar v'yit'aleh v'yit'halal sh'meih d'kudsha b'rich hu,

Blessed, praised, glorified, exalted, extolled, honored, magnified, and lauded be the name of the Holy Blessed One,

לְעֵלָּא מִן כָּל בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא, תֻּשְׁבְּחָתָא וְנֶחֱמָתָא, דַּאֲמִירָן בְּעָלְמָא, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

l'eila min kol birchata v'shirata, tushb'chata v'nechamata, da'amiran b'alma, v'imru amein.

beyond all blessings and songs, praises and consolations, that are uttered in the world; and let us say: Amen.

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

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

May there be great peace from heaven, and life for us and for all Israel; and let us say: Amen.

עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

Oseh shalom bimromav, hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu v'al kol Yisrael, v'imru amein.

May the One who makes peace in the heavens make peace for us and for all Israel; and let us say: Amen.

KAVANAH

You don't say Kaddish by yourself. That's not an accident, that's the design. Someone always answers.

SIT WITH THIS

Who are you standing for?

> Write their name. Then one thing about them you don't want to forget.

38

LAST WORDS

OSEH SHALOM

עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם

MAKER OF PEACE

> The last thing sung, usually with everyone's arms around each other. The final phrase — v'al kol yoshvei teiveil, and all who dwell on earth — was added by liberal communities who thought peace for us alone wasn't much of a prayer.

עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו,

Oseh shalom bimromav,

May the One who makes peace in the high places

הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ,

hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu,

make peace for us,

וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְעַל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל,

v'al kol Yisrael, v'al kol yosh'vei teiveil,

for all Israel, and for all who dwell on earth,

וְאִמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

v'imru: Amen.

and let us say: Amen.

"Until we are all free, we are none of us free."

EMMA LAZARUS

An Epistle to the Hebrews, 1883

KAVANAH

Peace in the high places is God's problem. Peace in this room, this week, this family — that part got assigned to us.

SIT WITH THIS

Who do you need to make peace with before this year gets old?

> Name them, then write the first text you would actually send.

THE REST OF THE PAGE IS YOURS

NOTES, ARGUMENTS, DOUBTS

KEEP GOING

WHAT I WANT THIS YEAR TO BE

BEFORE YOU CLOSE IT

WHAT I'M TAKING WITH ME

One line from these pages stuck. Maybe a prayer, maybe a question you couldn't answer, maybe something somebody said out loud. Write it down before you forget which one it was.

WHERE THE WORDS CAME FROM

SOURCES

MICHAEL W. TWITTY

Culinary historian, author of Koshersoul, interviewed in Modern Farmer, 2022

HANNAH SENESH

"A Walk to Caesarea," written November 24, 1942, at age 21. She was executed by firing squad in Budapest two years later, at 23.

RABBI ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

Written after marching from Selma to Montgomery with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 1965

RABBI SHARON BROUS

Author of The Amen Effect, interviewed by Religion News Service, 2024

RABBI JOACHIM PRINZ

Speaking immediately before Dr. King at the March on Washington, August 28, 1963. He had been a rabbi in Berlin under the Nazis.

RABBI ANGELA WARNICK BUCHDAHL

Central Synagogue, New York, CBS News, 2025

GLORIA STEINEM

My Life on the Road, 2015

JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG

Radcliffe Medal address, May 29, 2015

EMMA LAZARUS

An Epistle to the Hebrews, 1883

Hebrew liturgy follows traditional wording as used in Reform practice, including the matriarchs in the Amidah and m'chayeih hakol in the G'vurot. English translations are original to this book. Quotations are reproduced briefly and with attribution; every one has been checked against a primary source.

לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה
תִּכָּתֵבוּ

L'shanah tovah tikateivu — may you be written for a good year.

You don't have to have it figured out to be written in. That was never the deal.