



YOM KIPPUR

A TEFILLA TAKE-ALONG

Benjy Myers

הַנְּבִי הָעֲבִי מִמַּעַשׁ
נִרְעַשׁ וְנִפְחָד מִפְּחָד יוֹשֵׁב תְּהִלּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּאֵתִי לַעֲמֹד וּלְהִתְחַנֵּן לְפָנֶיךָ
עַל עַמֶּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתָּנִי
(תפילת הש"ץ קודם תפילת מוסף)

*I, of little deed, stand here
In awe and fearful of the One Enthroned on the Praises of Israel.
I come before You in supplication
On behalf of Your nation Israel who have sent me.
(From the ḥazzan's prayer prior to Mussaf)*

Introduction

The High Holidays are a time of intense *tefilla* (prayer) – communal and personal. We spend many hours together in the Beit Knesset (synagogue) trying to connect with God on many different levels; God as Creator, King, Judge, Father, Shepherd, Guardian, Beloved and more. Many of the prayers are in the form of poems, based on biblical verses and midrashic elements that are not necessarily familiar to all who pick up the *mahzor* (festival prayer book) on these Days of Awe. Many feel lost in the liturgy, feel that they have no connection with the *tefilla* and therefore miss the opportunity to relate to the day, the setting, the atmosphere and, by extension, to the Almighty Himself.

The aim of this work is as its name implies – a take-along. It does not come to replace our *tefilla*, but to supplement it; not to minimize our efforts in understanding the words (in the original or the translation), but to enhance them. It will include insights on the more familiar prayers and *brakhot* (blessings) as well as those unique to this time of year. The focus will be on the repetition of the Amida where most of the additions and changes unique to Rosh Hashana appear.

The guide is based in part on the Tefilla Trip-Tick produced by Rabbi Ari Perl,

previously of Congregation Shaare Tefilla in Dallas, TX. I had the pleasure of spending five years on *shlihut* in this wonderful community, and in which capacity I also participated in both traditional and explanatory services over the High Holidays as a member of the Community Kollel of Dallas.

It is also the result of being a *shlich tzibbur* in various communities across the world, and in particular at the Belfast Hebrew Congregation, where I had the opportunity to share my thoughts on the *tefilla* of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur with this delightful community.

Finally, my position as Educational Director of Ohr Torah Stone's Beren-Amiel | Straus-Amiel Institute, training rabbis and educators in Israel to serve as Jewish communal leaders across the world, has afforded me the opportunity to put this guide together.

May our prayers ascend before the Heavenly Throne and be answered for good.

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Introduction to the Second Edition

I am deeply honoured and grateful that this guide has been so warmly received in communities across the world. I am indebted for the comments and feedback that I have received, many of which have been incorporated into this updated edition.

”אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ פֶּתַח שַׁעֲרֵי שָׁמַיִם לְתַפִּלָּתֵנוּ.”

“Our Father, our King – open the gates of Heaven for our prayers.”

Rabbi Benjy Myers

Elul 5782

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Page numbers for two of the more popular *maḥzorim* have been added next to each section for ease of reference.

◇ AR = ArtScroll

◇ SK = Koren Mahzor with commentary by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.

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KOL NIDREI: THE BEGINNING

כָּל נִדְרֵי... מִיּוֹם כְּפוּרִים זֶה עַד יוֹם כְּפוּרִים הַבָּא
All vows... from this Yom Kippur to the next

The haunting melody of Kol Nidrei, perhaps more so than the words themselves, tell us that Yom Kippur, the Day of Days has arrived. This part of the *tefilla* prior to Maariv (the evening service) sets the scene for the rest of Yom Kippur.

The *tallit* is traditionally worn for Kol Nidrei and Maariv, even though normally the *tallit* is only worn during the day. In order to recite the *brakha*, one should put on the *tallit* before sunset.

Many men also have the custom of wearing a *kittel*, a long white robe, for the duration of Yom Kippur. This robe symbolises two main ideas:

Firstly, over the course of Yom Kippur we try to achieve the level of angels. Angels have no choice but to adhere to God's commands, and we too would like to live our lives according to His word. As such, we don't eat or drink – neither do angels – and we wear a white robe symbolizing purity. Secondly, the *kittel* is one of the robes in which a deceased person is wrapped prior to burial. This reminds us that Yom Kippur is the ultimate day of judgement, and we must take into account the possibility that we will be found guilty!

Or Zaru'a

אור זרוע

AR: 56
SK: 69

Two *sifrei Torah* (Torah scrolls) are removed from the Aron Kodesh (the Holy Ark), and taken to the *bimah* (reading desk). As the *sifrei Torah* are led through the congregation, the *hazzan* repeatedly intones the verse "A light is sown for the righteous, and for the upright of heart, joy" (Tehillim/Psalms 97:11). The Torah is often referred to as a light (cf. Mishlei/Proverbs 6:23), and if we follow this Torah, the laws and statutes within, we will be shown a clear path to follow, and do so with joy.

AR: 58
SK: 71

With two men holding the Torah scrolls flanking the *hazzan* on either side, they effectively form a Beit Din, a religious court. In this capacity, they declare that everyone may form part of the congregation, even those who, through their actions, would normally not be permitted to join. Yom Kippur is a day for everyone. We are all being judged, we are all part of the one nation, one family, and as such must all be present and represented.

Kol Nidrei**כל נדרי**AR: 58
SK: 73

Looking strictly at the words, this is a formula for the annulment of vows that is done by the three-man court described above. However, as noted earlier, it is so much more. It is the introduction to Yom Kippur and the prayer that lends its name to this part of the service. Kol Nidrei is recited three times, and each time the *hazzan* chants it a little louder. One reason this is to show that we are akin to a subject entering the royal court. The initial entry is hesitant, undertaken in awe and trepidation, but as we get nearer the throne and as our confidence in the king increases, we become more assured of ourselves, our surroundings and our ability to ask favours of the king in a loud, clear and confident voice.

Sheheḥyanu**שהחיינו**AR: 60
SK: 75

Each festival in the calendar is greeted with the *brakha* of “Sheheḥyanu,” thanking the Almighty for allowing us to reach this point in time. While normally this blessing would be recited at Kiddush over a cup of wine, on Yom Kippur, when there is no Kiddush, it is appended to the *tefilla*.

MAARIV: THE EVENING SERVICE

וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר

And it was evening and it was morning

Ever since the time of creation, the Jewish day has begun at night. The word *maariv* comes from the root ע.ר.ב. which means evening. It is also the same root as the word *areiv*, meaning guarantor. God is our guarantor that each night as we close our eyes and enter the world of sleep, He will look after us. As happened during the creation of the world, each day afresh the all-encompassing darkness is replaced by the invigorating sunlight of dawn.

On Shabbat: **Mizmor Shir**

בשבת: מזמור שיר

AR: 62
SK: 77

When Yom Kippur falls a Shabbat, we continue the service on Friday evening with two psalms – a song for Shabbat. Psalm 92 details God’s wondrous actions and our desire to be like the righteous, to dwell in God’s home, continuously singing His praises. Psalm 93 continues the description of God’s magnitude. Just as God girds himself with grandeur, so too do we change our clothing and enrobe ourselves in a way befitting the day itself.

Barkhu

ברכו

AR: 66
SK: 81

As we come together in prayer each evening and morning, we first praise God. In doing so, we bear witness that God is our sovereign and it is to Him that we turn with our entreaties, praises and thanks.

Barkhu is only recited in the presence of a *minyan* (quorum of men over the age of 13), further underscoring the importance of this statement.

AR: 66
SK: 81

The central part of this section is the Shema. In it we declare the unity of God and His ultimate rule over all of creation. We also affirm our belief in the system of reward and punishment and recall the exodus from Egypt, the singular most important event that transformed the offspring of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob into the Nation of Israel.

Surrounding the three paragraphs that incorporate the Shema, we say two *brakhot* (blessings) before and two after. The first speaks of God as the Ongoing Creator, who each day renews the world and the times that govern all of existence. The second *brakha* speaks of God as the giver of the Law, a Torah given to us in love. It is because of this everlasting love that we accept our sacred duty to study and engage in the world of Torah and *mitzvot*. In the first *brakha* after Shema, we speak of God as the Redeemer, emphasizing the salvation from Egyptian bondage and signing off with God as the ultimate redeemer. The final *brakha* in this section beseeches God to look after us as we lay to sleep. It is also a plea to God to care for us through all darkness and to spread His protective wings over us and all of Israel.

Note: At Maariv and Shaḥarit the verse after “Shema Yisrael” of “Barukh Sheim” is chanted aloud.

Amida**עמידה**

AR: 78
SK: 95

Each Amida comprises a beginning, middle and end. The first three *brakhot* (blessings) praise God as guardian of our ancestors and provider of life. The third blessing speaks of God’s sanctity. The last three *brakhot* give thanks for everything that God has done, does and will do for us, from listening to our prayers to providing peace.

The middle section is what changes, depending on the day and festival. On a regular weekday, the middle section includes thirteen *brakhot*, each one asking for something different – understanding, knowledge, forgiveness, health, wealth, a return to Zion and the Davidic dynasty. On Shabbat and

festivals, instead of thirteen intermediate *brakhot*, only one is inserted. This speaks about the uniqueness of the day, and during Mussaf of Shabbat, festivals and Rosh Hodesh (new moon), it also recounts the additional sacrifice brought in the Temple.

Before finishing the Amida, we have the first opportunity of Yom Kippur to confess our sins in Ashamnu and Al Hēit.

Note: If Yom Kippur falls on a Shabbat, make sure to insert the relevant phrases and passages.

On Shabbat: Vayekhulu

בשבת: ויכלו

AR: 100
SK: 121

While at Shaḥarit, Mussaf and Minḥa the *ḥazzan* now repeats the Amida, at Maariv there is no such repetition.

On Shabbat the service continues with the very first Biblical verses that speak of the very first Shabbat (Bereishit/Genesis 2:1-3). What follows is an abridged review of the Amida. One reason this was instituted in ancient times was to ensure that everyone left the *beit kneset* (synagogue) together, walking home safely in numbers.

PIYUTIM & SELIḤOT

On all other evenings (Except Pesah), the service would continue with Aleinu. On Yom Kippur, however, we continue with a series of *piyutim* (liturgical poems) and *seliḥot* (penitential prayers) whose highlights are the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy which are repeated throughout the service.

Ya'ale

יעלה

AR: 102
SK: 125

The opening *piyut* asks very simply that our prayers should rise before the Heavenly Throne and be accepted by God. Beginning with the last letter, ך, and reaching ך, we ask that all our prayers, starting this evening, continuing throughout the day and ending tomorrow evening with Neila – ascend and bring about God's forgiveness.

Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy

י"ג מידות

AR: 108
SK: 135

Throughout the *seliḥot* said during the month of Elul and the Ten Days of Repentance, the focal point has been the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy. The Talmud teaches us that anyone who says these words – first taught by God to Moshe – with sincerity, will never be turned away empty handed.

We recite these at three stages throughout Yom Kippur. Firstly during Maariv when they are punctuated by a series of *piyutim*. Secondly, when opening the Ark in morning prior to reading the Torah, similar to others festivals (although not if Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat). Finally, it serves as the core of the repetition of the Amida at Neila when all that's left for us to do is throw ourselves on the mercy of the Divine Court.

S'lah Na Ashamot

סלה נא אשמות

AR: 112
SK: 139

Please forgive! That is the refrain of this *piyut* which also follows the *alef-bet*. The first part of each line begins with the plea "please forgive," and the second part begins with the word "לְעוֹן," "for the sin." Such forgiveness, notes the composer, is God's glory, for only who has the power and authority to punish is able to forgive subjects who have wronged Him.

Omnam Kein

אמנם כן

AR: 116
SK: 145

The language of the this and the previous *piyut* reflects a brief exchange between God and Moshe. Following the sin of the spies, Moshe pleads with God: "Please forgive this nation their iniquity, in Your great mercy." God responds with two words: "סָלַחְתִּי כְדַבְרְךָ", "I forgive them, as per your request." While the previous *piyut* used Moshe's opening words, "please forgive", this *piyut* repeats God's response – "I forgive".

Towards the end we ask "Hear my voice and see my tears, take up my battle [against the evil inclination], pay heed to my words and respond – I forgive!"

AR: 120
SK: 151

In this rhyming *piyut*, the composer uses metaphor, and then explains the metaphor, of our relationship with God. The artist, stonemason, sailor, silversmith and others are able to manipulate what is in their hands, they are able to create or destroy, to repair or ruin, to hang on or let go. So too God has the ability to fashion, to fix, to devastate and demolish. We ask that He remember the covenant with earlier generations and treat us mercifully, rather than accede to the prosecutor's demand that we be met with the full force of strict justice.

Zekhor Raḥamekha**זכור רחמך**AR: 122
SK: 153

The introduction to Shema Koleinu is a series of verses that can be divided into three main themes. The first theme is remembrance. We ask God to remember our forefathers, remember His covenant with them, remember His inherent lovingkindness and mercy, remember Jerusalem and Zion.

The second part is *teshuva*. We ask for forgiveness, ask that God ignore our transgressions, purify us and that Yom Kippur serves as the time of atonement, as promised in the Torah (cf. Vayikra/Leviticus 16:30).

The final part, and indeed the final line, is a request to return to the Holy Temple, the place that serves as the center not just for Jewish worship, but for all nations, “for My house will be a house of prayer for all peoples.” It is with this verse ringing in our ears that we move forward, open the ark and cry out – “Shema Koleinu,” “hear our voices.”

Shema Koleinu**שמע קולנו**AR: 126
SK: 161

Over the course of Yom Kippur and indeed throughout the year, our *tefillot*, with a few minor exceptions, are all said in the plural. We sing in unison, we stand and sit in unison. We respond to the *ḥazzan* in unison. We are united as one, one mass choir, and thus pray together and entreat God to hear OUR voices, not just mine.

“[We must] immerse ourselves in the cacophony of sound and the experience... [and] may the sounds of prayer that emanate from us be pleasing and acceptable to Him.”¹

Ki Anu Amekha

כי אנו עמך

AR: 128
SK: 163

Over the course of the High Holidays, we constantly refer to God as our Father and our King. In this list we add several other titles – master, shepherd, guardian, beloved and more. We also list our position within the relationship with and dependence on God – nation, children, flock, treasure and more. By defining who we are, and how we see ourselves in relation to God, we are better able to clarify the kind of relationship we want with the Almighty.

We conclude by once again showing the difference between God and mankind. Whereas He is merciful, slow to anger eternal, we are brazen, full of sin and on this world for but a fleeting moment in the grand scheme of things.

Ashamnu & Al Hēit

אשמנו, על חטא

AR: 128
SK: 165

The confessional prayer, Ashamnu, is recited at each of the *tefillot* of Yom Kippur, and indeed in the silent Amida at Minḥa of Yom Kippur eve. It is accompanied by the list of Al Hēit, a comprehensive round-up of possible infractions.

Both of these confessions follow the *alef-bet*. Ashamnu lists one word for each letter – “אָנְשָׁמְנוּ,” “we are guilty,” “בְּגַדְנוּ,” “we have acted treacherously” and so on – with the exception of the letter ת that has three words associated with it (תַּעֲבֹבוּ, תַּעֲיִינוּ, תַּעֲתָעֵנוּ). Al Hēit lists two specific types of sin for each letter.

As mentioned earlier, we pray in the plural, united as one. So too with the

¹Rabbi David Singer, Rabbi of the Belfast Hebrew Congregation, writing in the community's Belfast Record, Rosh Hashana 5775.

confessions. If one of us sins, we have a collective responsibility to beg for forgiveness. “כל ישראל ערבים זה לזה,” “All Jews are responsible and guarantors for one another”. When we hear the news of a Jew being hurt or killed, what is our reaction? Why does it seem to affect us more when a Jew is arrested and the news published, or, on a more positive note, wins an international award like the Nobel Prize? The pride and hurt we feel in these situations must also be applied to asking for forgiveness. We are responsible, we are family, we are united in good times and bad. Now is the time to beat our collective chest and ask for forgiveness.

V'David Avd'kha

זוד עבדך

AR: 136
SK: 179

Following the confession, we recite a number of verses, statements and *piyutim* on the importance of repentance, on God's role as the provider of solace and atonement. We ask that God deal with us favourably, not just for our sake, but because of the actions of previous generations, in particular the patriarchs and matriarchs.

Avinu Malkeinu

אבינו מלכנו

AR: 144
SK: 189

As we stand in prayer, we refer to God in many different forms – God, Creator, Judge, Warrior and more. On Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur we emphasise two main forms: King and Father. As a king, God has ultimate control over our lives. In many monarchies – certainly in previous generations – the king could usurp the authority of the court, meaning that while the judge ruled one way and the law requires the ruling to follow a particular course, the king could change that as he sees fit, often in keeping with the needs and welfare of his kingdom. On Rosh Hashana we approach God as King, acknowledging that he is the ultimate ruler and his decisions are final. At the same time, God is our Father. Parents can also be seen as final arbiters in the lives of their children, particularly when they are young. And yet there is an inherent difference. A parent will often mete out judgement with a heavy dose of mercy and love. We seek God's judgment

at this time of year through both prisms – the King who can look at strict justice and decide whether that this best, most appropriate course of action, and also as a Father whose justice will always include love and mercy.

Note: Avinu Malkeinu is not recited on Shabbat.

Conclusion

סוף התפילה

AR: 148
SK: 195

Many congregations continue with Psalm 24 with its grand vision of the coronation of God as King, a theme that repeats itself throughout Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. This particular psalm is said twice a day from the beginning of the month of Elul through Hoshana Rabba at the end of Sukkot.

We conclude with Aleinu, a prayer that serves as the conclusion to all the daily services, and Psalm 27. This Psalm is recited twice daily from the beginning of the month of Elul through the end of Sukkot. In it we implore God with but one essential request – to be allowed to remain in God’s home, close to His presence and sheltered by His very essence.

Many communities finish with a song – either Yigdal, composed by Dayan Daniel ben Yehuda in 14th Century Rome, or Adon Olam, composed, many say, by the 11th Century scholar and poet, Ibn Gabirol. Both songs outline, in poetic verse, Maimonides’ Thirteen Principles of Faith.

SHAḤARIT: THE MORNING SERVICE

טוב להודות לה' ולזמר לשמך עליון; להגיד בבקר חסדך ואמונתך בלילות.
*How good it is to give thanks to God, to sing to Your exalted name;
To recall Your loving-kindness in the morning and Your faith at night.*

Our day is bracketed in prayer. We end each night with the recitation of the Shema, accepting upon ourselves the yoke of Heaven, and we begin each day giving thanks to the Almighty for giving us the opportunity to spend another day engaged with His world and Torah.

Wearing the Tallit

התעטפות בטלית

AR: 234
SK: 457

As we enter the world of formal prayer, we first don the *tallit*, a four-cornered garment that has *tzitzit* – fringes – in each corner.

As we seek to immerse ourselves in prayer, we also perform a physical act of wrapping ourselves in a garment that serves as a reminder of all the *mitzvot* (cf. Bemidbar/Numbers 15:39).

Morning Blessings

ברכות השחר

AR: 250
SK: 475

Our daily prayer begins with a series of *brakhot* that relate to our personal status as obligated Jews, free to keep the *mitzvot*, and continues with blessings relating to our actions in arising, dressing and getting ready for the day. In this way we give thanks to God for all He has given us, and makes us aware that each step of the way is overseen by the Omnipresent One.

Psalm for the Day & Psalm 27

שיר של יום, לדוד ה'

AR: 236
SK: 461

Each day of the week the Levites in the Temple would recite a different chapter from King David's Book of Psalms. We too do this, and depending on the day of the week, the psalm changes. Some

congregations will recite a special psalm that is befitting Yom Kippur, and not the psalm for the relevant day of week.

Note: The Psalm for the Day is normally said at a later point in the service. However, on Yom Kippur, the Psalm for the Day, Psalm 27 and the Hymn of Glory are generally recited right at the beginning of the day. This is because we view all our prayers – Shaḥarit, Mussaf, Minḥa and Neila as one long prayer, without the customary conclusions of Aleinu at the end of the first three. As such, it is necessary to find somewhere else during the day to say these sections as well, rather than appending them to Aleinu as is standard. Some congregations will say this after Shaḥarit and before taking out the Torah.

Hymn of Glory

שיר הכבוד

AR: 188
SK: 253

Also known as Anim Zmirot, this highly allegorical poem is often sung by a young child. It describes God and His throne in intense detail, including His interaction with Moses to whom He showed the knot of His tefillin. Understanding that God and the Jewish people share such experiences is aimed at bringing us closer to God, and to singing His praise. While this too is normally said on Shabbat and festivals at a later point in the service, On Yom Kippur it is recited at the start of the day.

Verses of Praise

פסוקי דזמרא

AR: 282
SK: 507

Before beseeching a king with our request, it is proper to first sing his praises. This is the format for the daily prayer, where we begin the public service by blessing “He who spoke and made the world,” and concluding with another *brakha* – “may Your name forever be praised.” In between these two blessings we find various psalms that praise the Almighty, and verses recalling the exodus from Egypt and our salvation at the Red Sea.

The *ḥazzan* for Shaḥarit begins with the word “*Hamelekh*” – “The King!”

This sets the tone for the rest of the *tefilla*, whose overarching theme is the coronation of God as the King who sits in judgement over His subjects.

Shema and its Blessings

קריאת שמע וברכותיה

AR: 324
SK: 561

As in the evening, the central part of this section is the Shema (see the Maariv section for further details on the Shema). The Shema is once again ensconced between *brakhot*, two before and one after. The first speaks of God as the creator of light and dark, the universe and all that it contains. The second recounts God's love for us, the Jewish people, that because of which this He gave and continually gives us the Torah – the Book of Life.

The *brakha* after the Shema describes our history as slaves in Egypt and retells the exodus from bondage to freedom. We conclude with the words “blessed are you, O Lord, who redeems Israel.” While in the weekday Amida a similar blessing ends with the words “Redeemer of Israel,” in the present tense, here the past tense is used to emphasise God's role in the exodus from Egypt and pivotal time that transformed us into a nation.

Note: At Maariv and Shaḥarit the verse after “Shema Yisrael” of “Barukh Sheim” is chanted aloud.

Amida

עמידה

AR: 350
SK: 589

As in the evening, the Shaḥarit Amida is comprised of seven *brakhot*. The first three and last three are similar to every other Amida throughout the year. The first three speak God's praises as the shield of our forefathers, as the Creator and ultimately the One who will bring the dead back to life and as the Omnipotent and holy Omnipresent One. The final three give thanks for everything we have received and everything we will receive in the future. Changes are made to reflect this time of year and additional verses are inserted to these blessings that speak of repentance and forgiveness, beseeching God to inscribe us in the Book of Life.

The middle *brakha* is dedicated to the sanctity of the day, concluding with

the words “...who sanctifies [the Shabbat,] Israel and the Day of Atonement.” What makes the festivals truly special is that it is the Jewish people who sanctify it, and through sanctifying the day, they in return are sanctified by God. We are partners together with God – He as King and we as His subjects – coming together to make the world a better place.

After completing the final *brakha*, we recite privately the confessional prayers of Ashamnu and Al ẖeit.

Note: If Yom Kippur falls on a Shabbat, make sure to insert the relevant phrases and passages.

REPETITION OF THE AMIDA

The repetition of the Amida serves an important role. Before the age of printing, owning a siddur was quite an expense, and not one that most people could allow themselves. Furthermore, not everyone could read. Therefore, the Sages instituted that the Amida be repeated for the benefit of those who were unable to pray by themselves. As such, this is a communal prayer and requires the congregation to be attentive to the *ḥazzan* and respond appropriately throughout.

The repetition also contains additions that are not found in the individual’s Amida, such as Kedusha and the Priestly Blessing that are only said in the presence of a *minyan*, as well as various *piyutim* that are not included in the silent Amida.

Missod & Eimekha

מסוד, אימן

AR: 366
SK: 613

This section serves as the *ḥazzan*’s introduction to the repetition. It outlines his fear and trepidation standing as the peoples’ emissary for this awesome task of bringing their prayers and supplications before the Divine Throne. Furthermore, on a regular weekday, Shabbat or festival, the repetition does not, as a rule, include any additional *piyutim* – liturgical poems – but rather maintains the same text said in the individual’s silent Amida, with only the addition of those sections recited when a

minyán is present. Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, however, are different. In this section, the *hazzan* states that any additions have been signed off by Sages of yesteryear and are not to be considered an interruption to the prayer.

Zokhreinu**זכרנו**

AR: 368
SK: 621

This addition to the Amida is made throughout the Ten Days of Repentance, beginning with Rosh Hashana. “Remember us for life, O King who is desirous of life, and inscribe us in the Book of Life for Your sake, O God of Life.”

Atta Gibbor**אתה גבור**

AR: 370
SK: 621

The second *brakha* of the Amida describes the multi-faceted role that God plays, with the central theme being that of life – sustaining and supporting the living, and, at the end of days, returning the dead to life. An addition which is made throughout the Ten Days of Repentance continues the theme, asking God to remember for life all living creatures in His great mercy.

Atta Hu**אתה הוא**

AR: 376
SK: 631

The Ark is opened for this next *piyut*, composed, according to some sources, by Rabbi Elazar HaKalir, a prolific *paytan* (composer of liturgical poems) who lived at the end of the 6th and beginning of the 7th Century. This *piyut* is constructed of short phrases, with each phrase beginning with the next letter of the *alef-bet*, and it presents a short, sharp overview of the power and majesty of God.

Imru Leilohim**אמרו לאלהים**

AR: 390
SK: 639

Like many others, this *piyut* utilizes the *alef-bet* as a starting point for each line, with all stanzas based on direct or slightly reworded extracts of biblical verses. In this poem, and the *piyutim* that follow

immediately after (though not all are said in every congregation) we describe God's awesome roles as Creator, Sustainer, Listener to the downtrodden and lowly, and many more. The refrain at the conclusion of each line calls on us to glorify God for His many attributes.

Ma'aseh Eloheinu

מעשה א-להינו

AR: 396
SK: 649

Similar to the previous *piyut*, this one too describes God's ownership, leadership and care for this world and all its inhabitants. The end of the *piyut* juxtaposes this with the actions of man.

Asher Ometz

אשר אומץ

AR: 398
SK: 653

God's praises are sung in this *piyut*. It lists in two groups of alternating verses those who sing God's praises – angels and Heavenly Hosts – and those from whom God expects to hear praise – mankind.

Al Yisrael

על ישראל

AR: 400
SK: 655

Following the theme of the greatness of God, this *piyut* uses one word, each beginning with the next letter of the *alef-bet*, to describe God's manifestation over Israel, for example: "On Israel is His holiness // On Israel is His greatness // On Israel is His Divine Presence // On Israel is His Glory."

Ha'aderet V'ha-emuna

האדרת והאמונה

AR: 402
SK: 655

Beyond God's omniscience and omnipotence is His omnipresence. He was, is and will be, to which this *piyut* pays testimony. Each line consists of four words, the first two emphasizing each of the *alef-bet* (two of א, two of ב and so on), with the final two words being "לְחַי עוֹלָמִים," "for the One who lives eternally." This popular *piyut* is also sung in communities as part of the *hakafot* of Simhat Torah.

AR: 404
SK: 659

The previous *piyutim* spoke of God's glory and many attributes, but this *piyut* brings us firmly into the stark reality of the dayas the day of judgement. God, the Ultimate Judge, judges all of creation. He is the only one who can examine mankind's heart and mind, and yet we ask Him to forgive our iniquities on this day of judgement.

Kedusha**קדושה**AR: 406
SK: 661

The focal point of the repetition of the Amida during the week as well as Shabbat and festivals, is the Kedusha. Here, utilizing verses from the Prophets and Tehillim (Psalms), we declare with great fervour God's holiness and glory, and call upon Him to restore His visible presence to Jerusalem and the Beit HaMikdash (Temple).

L'dor Vador**לדור ודור**AR: 408
SK: 663

The third *brakha* of the Amida concludes with a number of short paragraphs calling on God to instil His awe in all of creation so that we may come to serve Him together. We ask for joy to return to the Land of Israel and its inhabitants, seeking for God to reign over the whole world, giving honour to the righteous, removing evil from the world and have mercy on all of creation.

Atta V'hartanu**אתה בחרתנו**AR: 412
SK: 669

The fourth and middle *brakha* of the Amida refers to the sanctity of the day itself. God chose us, the Jewish people, from among the nations of the world to be His nation. As such, we have been given the festivals to observe and ask God that he continue to sanctify us through His commandments and give us the hearts and minds to serve Him with true sincerity.

AR: 412
SK: 671

On each of the biblical festivals we add a special *tefilla* in the Amida and Birkat Hamazon (Grace After Meals), in which we ask that God remember us at this auspicious time for good.

AR: 412
SK: 671

As mentioned in Maariv, these verses that serve as the introduction to Shema Koleinu, can be divided into three main themes. In the midst of the first part – remembrance – we pause from the individual recitation of the verses and engage in a united cry: “We have sinned, our Rock; forgive us, our Creator.” This comes immediately after the verse recalling the Sin of the Golden Calf where Moshe beseeches God to remember the Patriarchs and not turn to the sin and wickedness of the people.

AR: 416
SK: 679

Often in life, in conversations – and more so, in arguments – between people, there is much talking, but not always a lot of listening. As we go on our journey through the day's prayers we turn to the Almighty and ask simply that He listen to us, that He pay attention to us, that we have a relationship where we listen to Him, fulfil his commandments, and that He listens to us, granting us a good life.

As we approach Shema Koleinu, this call is further strengthened. No longer is it just the *hazzan*, but now we all cry out, together, united – “שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ,” “hear our voices”. We turn to God and say that we want to return and be near to Him all while He returns to us as well (“הֲשִׁיבֵנוּ ה' אֵלֵינוּ וְנִשְׁוֶבָה”), seeking a return to former glories (“חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ בְּקִדְדִם”) We want to stand in His presence even when we are old and infirm (“אֵל תִּשְׁלִיבֵנוּ לְעֵת זְקִנָּה”) and entreat God to deal with us in lovingkindness, confident in the knowledge that God will answer us (“אָתָּה תַעֲנֵה ה' אֶגְּ-לֵהֵינוּ”).

AR: 418
SK: 681

Many of the confessions in the Al Heit describe sins to do with the mouth – either because of what we put into our mouths (see the letter ה), or because of what comes out (see the letters ד, ו, ל, and נ for examples). The fact that there are so many more requests for forgiveness for improper speech rather than eating and drinking teaches us an important lesson. Eating or drinking improperly, be it non-kosher food or reaching a state of drunkenness or gluttony, generally affects the individual, and perhaps a small number around. However, evil speech – and in this day and age both actual speech as well as writing and use of social media – can result in a much greater impact for both good and bad. At this stage we ask for forgiveness for the bad, and we should use the opportunity to accept upon ourselves to improve in the future.

R'tzei & Modim**רצה, מודים**

AR: 432
SK: 705

We now enter the third stage of the Amida – thanksgiving. We ask that God accept our prayers and petitions, and thank Him for being our rock upon whom we have depended since time immemorial.

In Modim, the congregation recite a shorter and slightly different thanksgiving prayer than the *hazzan*. This is known as Modim D'Rabanan – the Rabbis' Thanksgiving – as it is a composite of various thanksgiving prayers composed by the Talmudic sages. It is recited in an undertone while the *hazzan* says the main Modim, as it is important to give thanks directly to one's master, and not only through an intermediary. This way, every member of the congregation marks their own appreciation of everything God has done and continues to do for them.

Priestly Blessing**ברכת כהנים**

AR: 434
SK: 709

The Priestly Blessing comprising verses from the Book of Bemidbar/Numbers ch. 6, is inserted between the penultimate and final *brakhot* of the repetition of the Amida. Through the *kohanim*

(priests), descendants of Aaron the High Priest, God bestows upon us blessings, culminating in the ultimate blessing – peace!

Sim Shalom

שים שלום

AR: 434
SK: 709

Above all, we and God desire peace. Peace brings light to the world; peace brings freedom to the world, freedom to serve the Almighty, to engage in his Torah and commandments, to take God's light that shines upon us and shine it onto the world in truth, lovingkindness, justice and mercy.

Avinu Malkeinu

אבינו מלכנו

AR: 436
SK: 711

In many congregations, the majority of Avinu Malkeinu is said privately. However, there are nine verses in the middle that are said responsively, first by the *hazzan* and then by the community. The first one, most appropriately, is a call that God - our Father and King - enable us to fully return to Him, followed by a request that the unwell receive a full recovery from their ailments. The majority of these verses are specific to this time of year, and we ask to be inscribed in the books of life - redemption, financial sustenance and wellbeing, forgiveness, and most importantly, in the Book of Life itself. On fast days during the rest of the year, instead of asking to be inscribed in these books, we ask God to remember us for a good life of health, sustenance and forgiveness.

The final verse, while not said responsively, is often sung together by the congregation. We turn to God and ask that He treat us with kindness even though we are not worthy of such treatment.

Note: Avinu Malkeinu is not recited on Shabbat.

Following the repetition of the Shaḥarit Amida and Avinu Malkeinu (except when Yom Kippur is on Shabbat and Avinu Malkeinu is not said) the service continues with Kaddish.

KRIAT HATORAH (READING OF THE TORAH)

The Torah is read in public on several occasions throughout the week and year. Each Monday, Thursday and Shabbat afternoon a short section from the beginning of the following week's portion is read. On Shabbat morning the reading follows a set cycle beginning and culminating each year on Simḥat Torah. On Rosh Ḥodesh (New Month) the description of the daily and specific new month sacrifice is read, and on the festivals a section of the Torah that has a special connection to the day is chosen. On Pesah we read about the exodus; on Shavuot it's the receiving of the Torah; on Sukkot it's an overview of all the festivals finishing with a description of Sukkot itself and the mitzva of the four species. On Rosh Hashana we read about the birth of Isaac and his subsequent binding on Mount Moriah. On Yom Kippur morning we read of the service of the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) in the Tabernacle on that day. This service is expanded upon in poetic form as part of repetition of the Mussaf Amida.

Note: On Yom Kippur six people are called to the Torah, plus the *maftir*. However, if Yom Kippur falls on a Shabbat, instead of the six aliyot there are seven, as is standard on any other Shabbat.

Taking out the Torah

הוצאת ספר תורה

AR: 440
SK: 719

The Torah is the book of life. It is the guide for our actions; its *mitzvot* and stories form the basis of our moral and religious actions, impacting our personal, family and communal lives.

As mentioned above, the Torah is read publicly on various days throughout the year, and each time it is read, it is accompanied from the ark to the shulḥan (reader's desk) with fanfare. We escort the Torah with verses from TaNaKh and approach the Torah scroll to kiss it on its way from and to the ark. The verses and psalms recited vary slightly from Shabbat to festivals and weekdays.

On the Three Pilgrimage Festivals (Pesah, Shavuot and Sukkot) as well as Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, we add the public recitation – traditionally sung in unison – of the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy, followed by a personal supplication, ending with the verse that is repeated three times asking God to heed our prayers in His abundant mercy.

Note: The Thirteen Attributes and supplication are omitted on Shabbat.

Reading of the Torah

קריאת התורה

AR: 452
SK: 727

Only one time a year was the High Priest allowed to enter the most sacred space – the Holy of Holies. The reading of the Torah describes in detail the sacrifices, incense offerings, changes of clothing, confessions and supplications that the High Priest made on behalf of Israel, “for on this day He will atone for you and purify you from all your sins, so that you may be pure before the Lord” (Vayikra/Leviticus 16:30).

The maftir is taken from chapter 29 of the Book of Bemidbar/Numbers, detailing the additional sacrifices brought on the Altar on this day.

Haftara

הפטרה

AR: 462
SK: 739

The Haftara, taken from the prophecies of Isaiah, brings God's account of His wrath and anger at those who forsook His word and acted egregiously. Worse still, not only were such actions directed against God, but also against man. And yet people fasted and asked for forgiveness, which was not forthcoming, but rather punishment. When questioning why fasting was not having the desired result, God's response is clear – fasting and afflicting one's body is inconsequential if social justice is not practiced. If with one hand we beat our chests while at the same time using the other fist to strike the poor and downtrodden, why should God accept our fast? If and when we help the needy, support the weak and hear the cries of our fellows, only then will God act accordingly and also hear our cries.

AR: 468
SK: 747

Prior to hearing the shofar and returning the Torah to the Ark, in many communities a number of communal prayers are recited on behalf of the sick and of the congregation, for the sake of the local government, for the soldiers of the IDF and the State of Israel.

Yizkor**הזכרת נשמות**

AR: 470
SK: 757

The memorial prayers for departed relatives is recited at this point. Many congregations add other communal prayers in remembrance of victims of the Holocaust, those killed in the IDF and victims of terror, as well as community members who have passed on. Different customs abound as to whether those whose parents are still alive should stay in or leave for Yizkor. For those who stay, as well as observing the proper decorum at this sensitive and emotional time, special prayers have been composed thanking God for the gift of parents and asking that He grant them a long and healthy life.

Returning the Torah**החזרת ספר תורה**

AR: 478
SK: 765

The procession with the *sifrei Torah* back to the ark begins with Ashrei. By inserting Ashrei at this point, we ensure that it is said three times as required - once in Pesukei D'Zimra, once here, and once at the opening to Neila.

As was done when taking the Torah from the ark prior to the reading, we now accompany the Torah back, again reciting a psalm and a collection of verses.

When Yom Kippur falls on a weekday, we recite Psalm 24, and when Yom Kippur falls on a Shabbat we recite Psalm 29.

We finish off the return stating that the Torah is the book of life, its ways are the ways of pleasantness and its paths are the paths of peace. We ask that God help us restore the spiritual heights of yesteryear.

MUSSAF: THE ADDITIONAL SERVICE

וּבַעֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ יְהִי לָכֶם וְעֲנִיתֶם אֶת נַפְשֵׁיכֶם...
שְׁעִיר עֲזִים אֶחָד חֲטָאת מִלְּבַד חֲטָאת הַכִּפּוּרִים וְעֹלֹת הַתְּמִיד.

And on the tenth day of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation and afflict your souls... One he-goat for a sin-offering; beside the sin-offering of atonement, and the continual burnt-offering...

According to the Talmud (Berakhot 26b), the three main *tefillot* of the day were institutionalised in place of the main daily sacrifices that were offered in the Temple. On Shabbat, Rosh Hodesh (new moon) and the festivals, an additional sacrifice was offered, in its place we now have the Mussaf Amida, the Additional Service.

The Mussaf Amida on Yom Kippur is long, and like the other silent *amidot* includes the confessional prayers of Ashamnu and Al Hēit. As such, it offers ample time to focus, to think about what transpired over the past year and where we'd like to be a year from now. The inclusion of the confessional prayers also allows one to focus on a specific area that needs working on in the coming days, weeks and months.

Take your time, read through the translation and any notes you may have as you use this time to have your own private conversation with God.

Hineni

הנני

AR: 482
SK: 771

“Behold, I stand here short of deed.” The *ḥazzan* opens with a private *tefilla*, a supplication to the Almighty that his prayers on behalf of himself, his family, community and all of Israel be accepted. While this prayer was written specifically for the *ḥazzan* to recite, it is well worth spending a few moments looking through this *tefilla*, and thinking for ourselves: what is it that we want this coming year for ourselves, family and community?

AR: 486
SK: 777

As mentioned above in the introduction to the evening Amida, the Amida comprises three separate sections. The first three *brakhot* give praise to God and the final three are *brakhot* of thanksgiving. The middle section changes depending on the day and the *tefilla*. On a regular weekday the 13 intermediate *brakhot* are blessings of request where we turn to God and ask Him for health, wealth, sustenance, knowledge and more. On Shabbat and Yom Tov the middle section speaks to the uniqueness of the day.

Towards the end of the Amida we ask God not only to forgive our iniquities, but perhaps more importantly, that we should no longer sin.

Note: If Yom Kippur falls on a Shabbat, make sure to insert the relevant phrases and passages.

REPETITION OF THE AMIDA

Having beseeched the Almighty in Hineni to serve as the emissary on behalf of the congregation, the *hazzan* now begins the repetition of the Amida. As was the case in Shaḥarit, the repetition also contains additions that are not found in the individual's Amida, such as Kedusha and the Priestly Blessing that are only said in the presence of a *minyan*. The noteworthy additions to the repetition are Unetaneh Tokef, the description of the High Priest in the Temple and Shema Koleinu.

Missod

מוסוד

AR: 502
SK: 803

As in Shaḥarit, the *hazzan* begins with a supplication asking for permission to add liturgical elements into the *tefilla*, stating that any additions are based on a long chain of tradition. The aim of the additional *piyutim* is to help set the tone and create the appropriate setting for the main elements of the day, namely, seeking atonement for previous misdeeds.

AR: 522
SK: 825

On this day, the concluding day of the Days of Awe, we stand before God and declare in these three *piyutim* His might and awesomeness; we recall that He is the creator and supports us each moment. Above all, as we sing his praises, we note that He is the one who desires our return and grants forgiveness.

At the end of Asher Eimatekha, the short paragraphs throughout the *piyut* are replaced by a longer paragraph stating that God desires praise from flesh and blood, described as a fleeting shadow or a passing breeze. It emphasises the timelessness of the Almighty while highlighting the finite nature of humanity. Nevertheless, God still wants to strengthen the connection with His creations and bestow His glory upon the world.

Unetaneh Tokef

ונתנה תקף

AR: 530
SK: 843

Unetaneh Tokef describes in vivid detail the awesome nature of the day, and is very much the focal point not only of the *hazzan's* repetition, but of the entire Ten Days of Repentance. Ascribed to Rabbi Amnon of Mainz, this passage sets the scene for the most dramatic questions of the day: who will live and who will die?

While this *piyut* lists many ways to die – hunger, thirst, fire, drowning, earthquake sword etc. – there is no such list for how to live. As we go through Unetaneh Tokef, we notice that everything is in the passive: who will be born, who will be afflicted, who will be rested, who will be impoverished and who enriched. Many things we receive passively, however, it is our responsibility to be active in making ourselves better, and making the world a better place. How? Unetaneh Tokef answers that as well – *teshuvah*, *tefilla* and *tzedaka*. By actively returning to our roots as Jews – *teshuvah* – by seeking a relationship and conversation with God, both as individuals and as a community – *tefilla* – and by doing positive things for others, by giving of ourselves to those in need, whether material, physical,

emotional or spiritual – *tzedaka*, we are able to remove the evil of the decree, make the world a better place and live life to its fullest. It's entirely, with God's help, up to us.

Ein Kitzva, Kedusha

אין קצבה, קדושה

AR: 534
SK: 853

As in every Amida that has a repetition, here too we find the Kedusha. Unlike other instances, here there is essentially a prelude to the Kedusha, beginning with the words “*ein kitzva*,” “there is no limit to Your years... You are befitting Your name and Your name is befitting You.” As a result, we find ourselves – indeed are compelled – to declare God’s great holiness, which is the purpose of Kedusha.

Ḥamol

חמול

AR: 538
SK: 857

Throughout our prayers on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, there is a constant refrain – God, have mercy, for we are not worthy. Here we add another element – *simḥa*! “And take joy in Your all that You have made.” This idea is emphasised later in the *brakha* when we ask God to bring “joy to Your land and happiness to Your city.” We want life, we want to be inscribed in the book of life, and we want to do so with great joy!

V’khol Ma’aminim

וכל מאמינים

AR: 538
SK: 859

In this *piyut* we outline many of God’s attributes, for example: “we all believe that God is a forgiving God.” This forms the basis for our approach to Him on this most awesome day. “We all believe that He responds to prayer, even a whispered one.” The volume of our supplications is inconsequential to God, but rather it is the intent, and as stated in the comment on the *haftara*, our actions that are important. The *piyut* follows the *alef-bet*, each letter receiving two lines. The first line makes a definitive statement about God’s being and action, and the second notes that “all declare in complete faith” that the action listed is true.

AR: 544
SK: 863

“And so, O Lord our God, place Your awe upon all Your creations.”
Knowing that God is omniscient and omnipotent, it is now becoming of all His creations to come together with one voice, doing His will, and praying for the day when good will overcome evil, when the righteous will rise and wickedness will cease to be.

AR: 546
SK: 867

The fourth *brakha* includes the description of the additional sacrifice brought on Yom Kippur. Along with the description on the offering, we note that nowadays we are unable to bring these offerings, because, due to our sins, the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed. We ask that God rebuild the Temple, gather the exiles and bring us to Jerusalem in great joy.

AR: 550
SK: 873

During Aleinu the Ark is opened (except for one, and in some editions, two verses that speak of the idolatrous nations of the world) and many have the custom to prostrate and bow to the floor upon reaching the words “and we bend our knees, bow and give thanks.”
In Aleinu we state that God has not made us like the nations of the world. This does not mean physically, but rather speaks to the mission of the Jew and the Jewish people. We are to be a light, to always act properly, be steadfast in our beliefs, be proud of being His nation and be proud of God as our King. As such, we also prostrate ourselves before God.

AR: 554
SK: 877

Similar to Hineni, this prayer is a personal supplication by the *ḥazzan* asking God that he be granted the ability to open his mouth and for the prayers to ascend before the Heavenly throne. It is recited with the Ark open, signifying the opening of the Heavenly gates, and

is said as an introduction to the section of the Avoda which describes the work of another community emissary on Yom Kippur, that is, the Kohen Gadol (High Priest).

Avoda: Amitz Ko'ah

סדר העבודה: אמיץ כהן

AR: 554
SK: 879

We now begin the section of the Avoda (lit. work), a description of the High Priest's Yom Kippur service in the Bet HaMikdash (Holy Temple) in Jerusalem, where many would gather round and watch as he performed the various deeds of the day.

Three times the Kohen Gadol would confess his and others' sins on this day. First, he would do so on behalf of himself and his immediate family. Secondly, he would also add the other priestly families, and finally he would confess on behalf of all the Jewish people. We also follow suit, in that we don't look around and say "he sinned." We don't beat our fellow Jew on the chest and tell them to ask for forgiveness for their misdemeanours. First, we change ourselves for the better. Then we try and influence our family, community and only then do we get to the rest of the world. While we do say the confessional prayers in the plural, our primary responsibility is to make sure that we are behaving properly.

Note: At each confession, the Kohen Gadol would recite the God's Ineffable Name. Upon hearing this, those present would prostrate themselves to the floor. In remembrance of this, we too do the same. Many people have the custom to bow to the floor when hearing the words "בִּנְרָעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִּים וּמוֹדִים", "בִּנְרָעִים וּמוֹדִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִּים וּמוֹדִים", "bow, prostrate, give thanks and fall on their faces."

Avoda: Tza'ad Leilekh

סדר העבודה: צעד לילך

AR: 562
SK: 887

After the first confession, the Kohen Gadol would draw the lots on the two he-goats. One would be sacrificed on the Altar, and one would be sent away, carrying with him all of Israel's sins.

Note: At each confession, the Kohen Gadol would recite the God's Ineffable Name. Upon hearing this, those present would prostrate themselves to the floor. In remembrance of this, we too do the same. Many people have the custom to bow to the floor when hearing the words "בִּרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים", "bow, prostrate, give thanks and fall on their faces."

Avoda: Kah Ma'akhelet

סדר העבודה: קח מאכלת

AR: 564
SK: 891

Only once a year would anyone enter the Holy of Holies. On Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol would do so, offering up the incense to, as it were, give a sweet-smelling reminder to God to act mercifully with His people.

The blood of the bull and he-goat offerings was sprinkled a number of times towards the Ark in the Holy of Holies. To prevent confusion, a special system of counting was devised, one which we recall at this stage.

Note: At each confession, the Kohen Gadol would recite the God's Ineffable Name. Upon hearing this, those present would prostrate themselves to the floor. In remembrance of this, we too do the same. Many people have the custom to bow to the floor when hearing the words "בִּרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים", "bow, prostrate, give thanks and fall on their faces."

Avoda: Shigro

העבודה: שגרו

AR: 566
SK: 895

Two he-goats were chosen for the Yom Kippur service. One was offered up on the Altar, and the other sent off into the wilderness, carrying with it the sins of the Jewish people.

Avoda: Marei Kohen

סדר העבודה: מראה כהן

AR: 570
SK: 901

At the end of Yom Kippur, having successfully completed his mission on behalf of the Jewish people, the Kohen Gadol was accompanied by the masses through the streets of Jerusalem. People would sing and dance, rejoicing and joining in the feelings of happiness and

contentment at what they trust will be a good new year. These scenes of unbridled joy are captured by the *piyut* “Marei Kohen” – the majestic sight of the High Priest as he left the Holy of Holies – like a rainbow in a cloud, like a rose standing proudly amidst the thorns and like a groom’s smile as he stands under the *huppa*.

Kol Eileh**כל אלה**

AR: 572
SK: 903

The scenes of joy are quickly replaced by scenes of sadness, of devastation and crying over what was but is no longer – the Temple in all its splendour, the sounds of the Levites singing and playing their instruments, the throngs of people who have come to be closer to God in His holy place and the majesty of the Temple service.

As we conclude this section, we ask God to remember. Remember Jerusalem and the Temple, remember the promise to the forefathers to make their descendants as numerous as the stars in heavens, and remember to act mercifully with us.

Eileh Ezkera**אלה אזכרה**

AR: 586
SK: 929

“These I will remember.” This section brings the story of ten leading Jewish luminaries at the time of the Mishna, martyred by the Romans. The time following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, particularly around the time of the Bar Kokhba revolt (132-135 CE), was one of cruel persecution. The study of Torah and performance of *mitzvot* was prohibited. These ten martyrs were killed, murdered by the Romans because they dared. They dared to live their lives as Jews, as proud Jews, living, learning, teaching, doing and encouraging others through their lessons and actions.

In Unetaneh Tokef we asked “Who shall live and who shall die? Who by the sword and who by fire?” These ten martyrs epitomise Jewish suffering throughout the ages, and we ask God to remember their suffering just as we now do, and inscribe us for a good year.

AR: 596
SK: 945

One of the verses we say as part of Shema Koleinu is “Do not cast us away in our old age; though our strength leaves us, please do not do so too.”

The obvious explanation is that along with old age, comes physical fatigue, and we are no longer able to do everything we could when younger. However, this line is not just about the physical, but in keeping with the rest of Shema Koleinu, it is a spiritual approach to God, a desire to be heard, to be close and not to be distanced from the Almighty. Here too we ask that though we may grow spiritually weary, we beg that this not be permanent, that we be strengthened and enjoy the Divine rays of warmth that shine upon us.

AR: 596
SK: 947

Two of the descriptions of God in this *piyut* describe Him as one who needs to constantly be on watch – shepherd and vineyard watchman. The shepherd keeps watch over a flock to be able to provide good grazing ground and look out for potential dangers. The vineyard owner must be constantly aware of the vines, what needs pruning, when to harvest, when and how much to water and more. While other elements in this list as we see them in day-to-day life leave some personal time and don't necessarily require 24-hour awareness, the shepherd and vine-grower aren't afforded that opportunity. This is how we view our relationship with God. In order to grow, to be sustained and for fruits to come forth, we require and desire His constant watch.

AR: 598
SK: 949

As we recite each word of Ashamnu and each line of Al H̄eit, we stand bowed over and beat our chests as a sign of complete contrition. It is a physical manifestation of what our emotional state should be. We're sorry and ashamed. We're standing before the Ultimate Judge

and are so embarrassed of our actions that we cannot even raise our eyes to meet His gaze.

R'tzei & Modim

רצה, מודים

AR: 610
SK: 969

As we enter the final stages of the repetition of the Amida, we beseech God to accept the people of Israel and their prayers.

In the event that the *kohanim* ascend in preparation for the Priestly Blessing, a minor addition is made, imploring the Almighty to accept our prayers as if they were sacrifices offered up on the altar, and that we look forward to our eyes gazing once more upon the splendour of Jerusalem and the Temple.

After Modim of Mussaf on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, we add one last supplication asking God to be merciful and not be quick to anger, removing from us the threat of disease, suffering, war and bloodshed. Beyond such physical manifestations of strife, we ask that the plague of baseless hatred also be removed from us, so that we may only grow together, united and in peace.

Priestly Blessing

ברכת כהנים

AR: 614
SK: 975

We ask that God bless us with the three-part blessing given through the *kohanim* – blessing and safety, shining countenance and graciousness, and peace.

In many communities throughout the world, the *kohanim* only recite the Priestly Blessing during Mussaf of Yom Tov (Pesah, Shavuot, Sukkot, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur). As such, this is a wonderful opportunity to receive the Divine blessing in its intended form. Many families have the custom that the children gather by their parents, thereby receiving the blessing not only as individuals, but as a family.

The *kohanim* themselves hold their arms aloft under the *tallit*, and when uttering certain words sway from side to side, symbolising the spreading of God's blessing in all directions.

AR: 620
SK: 981

The final blessing – peace – recalls that God has given us the Torah of life in order to instill in us a love of life and love of the God of life. As we head into the section of *hayom* (below), we recall the verse that “you who have embraced and cleaved to the Lord your God are all living today.” Indeed, one of the ways we celebrate life is by giving the opportunity to future generations to take what we have taught them, and to live their lives to the full, cleaving to God and continuing the cycle of partnership with the Creator in the challenging, wonderful and ongoing task of recreating the word each day in God’s image.

Hayom**היום**

AR: 622
SK: 983

We conclude with another form of *hayom* – today. Today we ask God to bless us, to strengthen us, hear our cries and recall us for good. We ask for it today, without delay, and of course we’ll remember to say thank you as well.

Final Kaddish**קדיש שלום**

AR: 624
SK: 987

The repetition has ended, and so a final grand Kaddish is recited including a line that the requests and supplications of all the House of Israel come before our Father in Heaven.

In many communities this Kaddish is sung to a lively, upbeat tune ensuring that the efforts we’ve put into our prayers finish on a high.

As mentioned previously, while on a regular Shabbat or festival there would now be concluding prayers including Aleinu and Ein Keilohenu, on Yom Kippur we end Mussaf here, and continue with Minḥa, creating one long prayer.

MINḤA: THE AFTERNOON SERVICE

אֶת הַכֶּבֶשׂ אֶחָד תַּעֲשֶׂה בַבֹּקֶר וְאֶת הַכֶּבֶשׂ הַשֵּׁנִי תַעֲשֶׂה בֵּין הָעֶרְבָיִם

The one lamb you shall offer up in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer up in the afternoon.

Minḥa, beyond being the name given to the afternoon service, also means gift. It is during this time that the second part of the daily sacrifice was brought in the Temple.

According to the Talmud (Berakhot 26a) the times for each of the daily prayers was instituted by the forefathers. Of Yitzḥak it is said “Yitzḥak went out to meditate in the field towards evening” (Gen. 24:63). The sages understood this to mean that he went out to pray.

Minḥa is often the hardest of the daily prayers as it comes in the middle of the day when we are busy doing a thousand different things. Perhaps this is why Yitzḥak is described as meditating. Meditation enables a person to withdraw from one’s day-to-day grind and ascend the necessary steps to engage in conversation with the Almighty. It is no easy task, but we take heart from our forefathers who showed us the way.

Normally Minḥa would begin with Ashrei. However, on Yom Kippur we begin immediately with the reading of the Torah. One reason is to give Neila something with which to begin, as otherwise it would start with the Amida, with no prelude.

Reading of the Torah

קריאת התורה

AR: 630
SK: 993

Like the morning’s reading, the afternoon’s selection is from the book of Vayikra, Leviticus, and also from the portion of Aḥarei Mot. In it we read about the prohibition of forbidden illicit relationships.

Family is at the bedrock of community and society, and engaging in such immoral acts could easily lead to the breakdown of society. As mentioned previously, while we say the majority of our *tefillot* in the plural as a sign of

communal responsibility, nevertheless it is incumbent upon the individual to behave in an appropriate manner. The reading of the Torah here unites both elements – personal responsibility as the preventative medicine for the breakdown of communal life.

Haftara

הפטרה

AR: 634
SK: 999

The Book of Yona serves as the *haftara* for the afternoon of Yom Kippur. The story told is one of personal and societal redemption, most befitting for Yom Kippur.

Many communities add a number of verses from the Book of Mikha that also speak of God's desire to forgive His people, recall previous promises to our forefathers and throw our sins into the depths of the ocean.

Amida

עמידה

AR: 650
SK: 1015

The Minḥa Amida is similar to the Maariv, Shaḥarit and Mussaf Amida in that it comprises seven blessings, with the middle one speaking of the uniqueness of the day.

Similar to Shaḥarit and Mussaf, here too the *ḥazzan* repeats the Amida and adds the Kedusha. However, unlike Minḥa on weekdays, Shabbat and festivals, the Priestly Blessing is also added.

Note: If Yom Kippur falls on a Shabbat, make sure to insert the relevant phrases and passages.

REPETITION OF THE AMIDA

Missod

מסוד

AR: 666
SK: 1041

As in Shaḥarit and Mussaf, the *ḥazzan* begins with a supplication asking for permission to add liturgical elements into the *tefilla* – “I open my mouth in prayer and supplication, to beseech and beg the King, fully of mercy, who grants forgiveness and pardons sins.”

AR: 670
SK: 1049

The final of four responsive lines – first said by the *hazzan* and repeated by the congregation – we mention two of the ministering angels, Mikhael and Gavriel, who are standing either side of the Divine Throne. In Unetaneh Tokef we speak of the angels who rush back and forth in awe of the Day of Judgement, but these two stand firm singing the praises of God, “there are none in the heavens like the Lord” and recalling the virtues of Israel – “and none on earth are like Israel.”

U’vkhein Ten Paḥdekha**ובכן תן פחדך**

AR: 674
SK: 1053

“Let them become one entity.” While the Jewish people were camped at Mount Sinai ready to receive the Torah, we are taught that they camped as one person with one heart. It is unity within society, while giving room for individuality, that is the hallmark of a healthy world. Here we ask not only that the Jewish people be united in their devotion to and service of God, but indeed all of creation.

Zekhor Raḥamekha**זכור רחמך**

AR: 676
SK: 1059

The theme of *teshuva*, returning, applies not only to mankind, but, perhaps surprisingly, to God as well. We call to God to gather us in and return the exiles to our homeland.

Shema Koleinu**שמע קולנו**

AR: 682
SK: 1069

The final verses of Shema Koleinu, often said silently rather than responsively, call on God to treat us favourably. This in turn will shame our enemies, as they will see that the special relationship between God and the Jewish people endures.

The concluding verse taken from Tehillim/Psalms 38 reaffirms our trust and hope that God will respond to our prayers.

AR: 682
SK: 1071

“We are Your chosen ones, and You are our God.” As seen above in Aleinu, the Jewish people are the chosen ones. This is not meant to give us a sense of superiority, but rather a sense of responsibility. We must be a light, showing how to live a full, moral, righteous and upstanding life in all that we do, privately and publicly.

Ashamnu & Al H̄eit**אשמנו, על חטא**

AR: 684
SK: 1071

Between the paragraph of Ashamnu and the list of Al H̄eit, we note that God knows everything. He knows about private and public actions, whether intentional or not. As such, what is the purpose of our confession? Mainly, it gives us the opportunity to realise what we have done, and use Al H̄eit as a springboard to remember things we may forgotten and which are not on the list. Additionally, if we only relied on God's knowledge and never recounted it ourselves, we would not be able to ask for forgiveness from either God or Man.

V'David Avd'kha**ידוד עבדך**

AR: 692
SK: 1083

Following the confessional list of Al H̄eit we reach a section that traditionally is said silently. We begin with a quote from Kind David's Book of Tehillim 19: 13 (Psalms) “Who can comprehend errors? Clear me of hidden [sins]!”

We ask God not only to forgive those sins that we remember, regret and ask for atonement, but also those that, with our human fallibility, we don't even recall.

Conclusion of the Service**סוף התפילה**

AR: 700
SK: 1103

Just as at the conclusion of Mussaf, here too the service ends with Kaddish, and not with Aleinu.

Some communities insert Avinu Malkeinu here, however the majority continue directly with Neila following the Kaddish.

NEILA: THE CONCLUDING SERVICE

פָּתַח לָנוּ שַׁעַר בְּעֵת נִסְגֵּילַת שַׁעַר כִּי פָּנָה יוֹם

Open for us a gate at the time of the closing of the gate, for the day has drawn to a close

On a regular weekday, there are three daily prayers – Shaḥarit, Minḥa and Maariv. On Shabbat and festivals when an additional sacrifice would have been brought in the Beit Hamikdash, we add the additional service – Mussaf.

Yom Kippur is different still. Neila is the final opportunity to cry out, to beseech the Almighty just before the Book of Life is closed for another year. As such we replace one word for another. The additional lines that were inserted in the Amida for the previous ten days asking God to inscribe us for life (from the root כ.ת.ב.) are replaced by the plea that this inscription now be joined by the Divine Seal (from the root ח.ת.מ.).

Ashrei

אשרי

AR: 706
SK: 1105

As noted above, Neila has “borrowed” the otherwise traditional opening from Minḥa to allow for a beginning before heading into the Amida.

Psalm 145 is bracketed by verses from other psalms describing the greatness of dwelling in God’s abode. It finishes with a call that we will bless God from now and forever.

Uva L’Tziyon

ובא לציון

AR: 708
SK: 1109

Following Ashrei come a series of verses from the entire TaNaKh, some with their Aramaic translation. This is known as Kedusha D’sidra – the arranged Kedusha.

This section concludes with the verse: “God desired, for the sake of His righteousness, to make the Torah great and to glorify it.”

AR: 712
SK: 1071

The content and structure of the personal Amida at Neila is similar in many ways to the Amida at Maariv, Shaharit and Minha of the rest of Yom Kippur. However, there are three main differences. Firstly, as mentioned in the introduction to this section, we change the word “inscribe” to “seal”. Secondly, the confessional prayer only includes Ashamnu, but not the longer exposition of Al Heit. Thirdly, the difference in the ending is perhaps most noticeable. We add two extra paragraphs prior to the standard conclusion. The first begins with the words “You give a hand to transgressors, and Your right arm is outstretched to receive returners.” This summarises our hopes for the day, that God will assist in our process of *teshuva*, and be willing to accept us back into the fold. The second paragraph opens with the words “You, from the outset, separated mankind.” It is this distinction, this unique place in creation, that places upon us an even greater responsibility for everything and everyone around us, and further amplifies the need for atonement from God.

REPETITION OF THE AMIDA

Selihot

סליחות

AR: 736
SK: 1153

The climax of Yom Kippur is upon us, and the repetition of the Amida includes *selihot* (penitential prayers), similar to the *tefilla* the previous evening. Here too the highlights are the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy. The custom is to stand for the duration of the repetition of the Amida. However, if this is difficult, an effort should be made to stand at least for the recitation of the Thirteen Attributes and also for Kedusha. “Open for us a gate at the time of the sealing of the gate” – in this cry we call for God not to forget us once we have departed from this Day of Awe and from the season of repentance and forgiveness, but rather to provide us with constant opportunities to return to Him, and, as King David wrote in Psalm 27, to dwell in His home and visit His sanctuary.

AR: 736
SK: 1153

The Talmud (Rosh Hashana 17b) states that “a covenant has been made regarding the thirteen attributes that they will not be turned away empty-handed.” This was a promise made by God to Moshe that when these words are used in prayer, God will not be able to ignore them.

During Neila, similar to the beginning of Yom Kippur at Maariv, we recite these words – often aloud and in unison – in fervent hope and prayer that God’s Divine mercy will shine forth. Indeed, at this stage on Yom Kippur, after we have poured our hearts out in supplication, after begging for forgiveness and undertaking to approach our lives with renewed faith, vigour and determination to do good, all that’s left is to implore the God of Mercy that he seal us for a good year.

As mentioned above, each time these verses are said they are prefaced by a *seliḥa*, a penitential prayer.

Ezkerā**אזכרה**

AR: 746
SK: 1169

This *piyut* begins with the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy and goes on to beg for mercy.

There are some who find this *piyut* problematic for two main reasons, leading to attempts to reword it. It begins by contrasting the downtrodden and humiliated state of Jerusalem, the Divine City, with other cities around their world that stand tall in all their splendour. Looking at the modern-day Jerusalem, this does not appear to be true, for although the Temple has not yet been rebuilt, Jerusalem is a beautiful, modern city. Indeed, we can see the fulfilment of the prophet's vision that old men and women will sit in its streets and children will play gleefully in its alleyways (Zekharia 8:4-5).

More significantly, this *piyut* turns to the Attribute of Mercy to act as intermediary between us and God, rather than turning directly to the Almighty.

Ashamnu**אשמנו**

AR: 750
SK: 1177

Interestingly, while every other service over the course of Yom Kippur has included both the confessional prayer of Ashamnu as well as the longer, more comprehensive list of Al Hēit, at Neila only the shorter version is recited. It is almost as if, even in our confessions, we're stating that time is of the essence, there's almost nothing else that we can say other than 'we're guilty! Forgive us!'

Avinu Malkeinu**אבינו מלכנו**

AR: 758
SK: 1189

Avinu Malkeinu is said following the repetition of the Amida on Yom Kippur, even if it falls on Shabbat. Here too, just as in the Amida, the root א.ת.ב. (inscribe) is replaced with root א.ת.מ. (seal).

Shema Yisrael & the Shofar**שמע ישראל ותקיעת שופר**

AR: 762
SK: 1195

Following Kaddish, Neila and all of Yom Kippur ends with three declarations. No longer do we speak of repentance and forgiveness. The time for beseeching is over. All that's left is to declare who we are and what God is to us.

1. Shema Yisrael – the declaration of God's unity and sovereignty which is said once.
2. Barukh Sheim – “May His name be blessed forever” is repeated three times.
3. The simple, but oh so powerful “the Lord is God!” Which is repeated seven times.

We stand united holding our collective breaths as the *shofar* is sounded marking the end of Yom Kippur. It also functions, God willing, as the harbinger of the ultimate redemption and the arrival of the Messiah.

It is with this final redemption in mind, and positive in our outlook that we have been judged favourably, that we cry out “next year in Jerusalem.”

In some communities, the shofar is sounded after Maariv rather than at the conclusion of Neila.

MAARIV: THE EVENING SERVICE

וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר

And it was evening and it was morning

Maariv marks the beginning of a new day, a 'new dawn' as it were, even though it is said at nightfall.

The basic structure remains, while some of the content changes. Notably, all the additions that were inserted in the Amida and Kaddish are no longer said.

V'hu Raḥum

וְהוּא רַחוּם

AR: 766
SK: 1203

Each weekday Maariv begins with two verse asking God to forgive us our transgressions and that He hears our heartfelt prayers.

This may seem a little strange coming on the back of a 25-hour fast of prayer and supplication, but it teaches us that we are always in need of self-improvement and of course of Divine assistance.

Barkhu

בִּרְכוּ

AR: 766
SK: 1203

Once again we begin the formal part of the *tefilla* inviting all present to bless God “who is blessed forever and ever”.

Shema and its Blessings

קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע וּבְרָכוֹתֶיהָ

AR: 766
SK: 1203

In the evening, the Shema is surrounded by two blessings before and two after. These blessings bracket the Shema which is the ultimate declaration of our faith in the one true God.

Amida

עֲמִידָה

AR: 774
SK: 1215

While the opening three and closing three *brakhot* of the Amida

are similar to the other instances of the Amida that we have seen over the course of Yom Kippur, it is the middle section that changes dramatically. We insert thirteen supplications asking God for health, wealth, understanding, forgiveness, a return to Zion and a general request that He accept our prayers.

In the first of the thirteen middle blessings, we insert a paragraph for *havdala* (lit. separation) in which we note that it is no longer Yom Tov but rather a weekday. We ask that God bestow upon us days free from sin and deep in connection with the Almighty.

The various changes that were made in the Amida throughout the Ten Days of Repentance are discontinued beginning with this Amida.

Conclusion of the Service

סוף התפילה

AR: 784
SK: 1231

As noted previously, at Maariv there is no repetition of the Amida, and we continue with Kaddish, Aleinu and Psalm 27.

Most congregations will conduct the *havdala* ceremony here, drinking a glass of wine, looking up to a lit candle (and if Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat, smelling herbs or sweet spices) marking the conclusion of the holy day and the start of the weekday.

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