

# Selichot

♪ אור זרע לצדיק ולישרי-לב שמחה. (Psalm 97)

**Or zaru'a latzadik ul'yishrei lev simcha.**

Light is sown for the righteous, radiance and joy for the pure of heart.

---

On Time, Space and Forgiveness:

“For everything there is a season, a purpose for every experience under heaven... A time to weep and a time to laugh, A time to grieve and a time to dance...” (Ecclesiastes 3)

A time to be together and a time to be apart;

A time to celebrate at home and A time to pray together from afar;

A time to study and a time to act;

A time to comfort and a time to be comforted.

A time to ask forgiveness, and A time to forgive others. (Rabbi Rachel Sabath Beit-Halachmi)

---

Now is a time for turning, as the seasons change with their natural rhythm. But for us turning does not come easily. It takes an act of will for us to make a turn. It means breaking with old habits. It means admitting that we have been wrong; and this is never easy. It means losing face and it means starting all over again. It means saying, “I’m sorry.” But unless we turn, we will be trapped forever in yesterday’s ways. God, help us to turn – from callousness to sensitivity, from hostility to love, from pettiness to purpose, from envy to contentment, from carelessness to discipline, from fear to faith. Turn us around, and turn us toward each other... and bring us back toward You.

♪ הַשִּׁיבֵנו יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְנָשׁוּבָה, חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֵדֶם. (Lamentations 5:21)

**Hashiveinu Adonai Eilecha, v'nashuvah. Chadeish yameinu k'kedem.**

Help us to return to You, O God; then truly shall we return. Renew our days as in the past.

---

Eternal God, we have gathered here tonight to find communion with You and to search out the light of faith. In the rush of our busy daily lives we often forget to focus upon simple virtues and basic values. We forget that we can experience true contentment and serenity only when we know that we have lived up to the best in ourselves.

Now the time of repentance and renewal has come. The Days of Awe provide us with moments to meditate on the meaning of our lives, on the worth of our deeds, and upon the regrets that mock our noblest intentions. No human being lives without failures. No year passes without its disappointments, its sorrows, its sins.

In the twilight of the vanishing year, we lift our hearts to You, O God. Let these sacred days remind us that You have called us to Your service. You have made us in Your image, fragile souls empowered with goodness and truth, justice and love. Awaken us to the wisdom of our faith, and let us turn to You now.

♪ הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְנָשׁוּבָה, חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם.

*Hashiveinu Adonai Eilecha, v'nashuvah. Chadeish yameinu k'kedem.*

Help us to return to You, O God; then truly shall we return. Renew our days as in the past.

---

And so we come to this hour of Selichot to celebrate goodness, to proclaim what is right and true – to praise, to thank, to bless the great Giver who gives and renews our lives. Despite these recent months of isolation where our proximity to one another has been curtailed, at this hour we turn in spirit to loved ones, to friends, and to our people everywhere – the whole House of Israel. And our hearts turn toward the human family; we pray for its healing. Yet the hardest of all is the inward gaze, the return to our self, the honest reckoning of the soul: *cheshbon hanefesh*.

We need to come into touch with our own power, not with titles, or possessions, but with the power that is ours. We need to know that we have the strength to transform what we are into what we ought to be. The day has come to make an accounting of our lives: of what we really have, of what we really lack, of who we really are, and of what we can yet become. The day has come to make an accounting of our lives, for we have remained enchained too long to less that we can be.

We ask: how to account for selfish acts, dishonesty, and senseless anger? How to account for the shadows, the storms, the bitterness in our lives – the damage and distress we cause? How to own up to it all – and find our way back, with integrity, in peace?

We ask: have we the will to change? And if not now, when?

---

On holidays we run away from duties  
On holy days we face up to them.

On holidays we seek to let ourselves go.  
On holy days we try to bring ourselves under control.

On holidays we try to empty our minds.  
On holy days we attempt to replenish our spirits.

On holidays we reach out for the things we want.  
On holy days we reach out for the things we need.

Holidays bring a change of scene.  
Holy days bring a change of heart. (Rabbi Sidney Greenberg)

---

♪ **Create a pure heart in me, Great Spirit, create a pure heart in me;  
And renew a true soul within me and renew a true soul within.** (*Psalm 51*)

---

## On Repentance

We are taught: *Days are scrolls. Write on them only what you want remembered* (Bachya Ibn Pakuda, 11<sup>th</sup> Century). But we remember our weakness, and our days bear the mark of all that went wrong. On this night we have hope in the One who sustains us:

Though we stumble and falter, You promise forgiveness.

If we stray from the truth, You do not forsake us.

If we sink to the depths, Your mercy uplifts us.

If our urges betray us, Your compassion is endless.

If we distance ourselves, You do not disdain us.

If we abandon Your teachings, still You embrace us.

If we seek You sincerely, Your presence surrounds us.

If we pray from the heart, You listen with Yours.

Though we stumble and falter, we are blessed by Your promise.

---

♪ **And renew a true soul within me and renew a true soul within.**

Let us strive to acquire the priceless knowledge of how to make amends when we have wronged others. When our pride will not allow us to seek forgiveness, let us learn that contrition is more precious than pride. Yet, we must remember that contrition is not enough. We must discipline ourselves by repeated acts of love and consideration, to repair whatever damage we may have done. With the approach of the New Year, will we be strong enough to face someone and say, by word and by deed, “I repent of the wrong I have done to you?”

This is how the teachers of old, in their abiding wisdom, spoke of repentance:

Great is repentance,  
*For it brings healing to the world.*

Great is repentance,  
*For it brings about redemption.*

Great is repentance,  
*For because of it, premeditated sins are accounted as errors.*

Great is repentance,  
*For it prolongs a person's years.*

*T'shuvah* is a deeply hopeful process. It is based on the faith that our transgressions are aberrations from our norm, that they do not define us. Our tradition teaches that we are naturally endowed with the ability to find our way back, to actualize the goodness of our nature. We must waste no time in finding that path. We must hurry to repent and cleanse ourselves of the spiritual toxicities that prevent us from realizing our highest potential. Then we will find both hope and peace.

---

## Confession of Sin

For these sins, our God, we ask forgiveness:

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּזִדּוֹן וּבְשִׁגְגָה, וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁבוּעַת שְׁוֵא.

*Al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha b'dibur peh, v'al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha bishvuat shav.*

The ways we have wronged You through the words of our mouths;  
and harm we have caused in Your world through insincere promises.

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּפִלְיוֹת, וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּיִצְרַר הָרֶע.

*Al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha biflilit, v'al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha b'yetzer harah.*

The ways we have wronged You by judging others unfairly;  
and harm we have caused in Your world by giving in to our hostile impulses.

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁנְאָת חֲנָם, וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּוִדּוּי פֶּה.  
*Al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha b'sinat chinam, v'al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha b'vidui peh.*

The ways we have wronged You by hating without cause;  
and harm we have caused in Your world through hypocrisy.

וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּבִלֵי דַעַת, וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּטִמְאַת שְׁפָתַיִם.  
*Al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha bivli da'at, v'al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha b'tum'at s'fatayim.*

The ways we have wronged You through our thoughtlessness;  
and harm we have caused in your world through offensive speech.

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּרַכִּילוּת, וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּזִלְזוּל הוֹרִים וּמוֹרִים.  
*Al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha birchilut, V'al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha b'zilzul horim umorim.*

The ways we have wronged You through gossip and rumor;  
and harm we have caused in Your world through disrespect to parents and teachers.

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּתִשׁוּמַת יָד, וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּמִשְׁא וּבְמַתָּן.  
*Al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha bit'sumet yad, v'al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha b'masa uvmatan.*

The ways we have wronged You by betraying trust;  
and harm we have caused in Your world through dishonesty in business.

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּגִלּוּי עֲרִיּוֹת, וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּמֵאֲכָל וּבְמִשְׁתֶּה.  
*Al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha b'gilui arayot, v'al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha b'maachal uwmishteh.*

The ways we have wronged You through sexual immorality;  
and harm we have caused in Your world through consumption of food and drink.

וְעַל כָּלֵם, אֵלּוּהַ סְלִיחוֹת, סְלַח לָנוּ, מְחַל לָנוּ, כְּפָר-לָנוּ.  
*V'al kulam, Elo-ah s'lichot, s'lach lanu, m'chal lanu, kapper-lanu.*

For all these failures of judgment and will - God of forgiveness, forgive us, parton us,  
lead us to atonement.

---

## Alternative Confession

Forgive us, God, for defiling Your image when we destroy one another.

Forgive us for calling upon You with our lips and blaspheming You with our destructive actions.

Forgive us for robbing and plundering Your earth.

Forgive us for abusing and neglecting those who are weak and helpless.

Forgive us, not that we may defile Your image again, for we have squandered many a reprieve. Forgive us rather for the sake of our children who look beseechingly to us.

Teach us to forgive ourselves for our sins, O forgiving God; help us to overcome them.

For all these, O God of mercy, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.

♪ וְעַל כָּלֵם, אֱלֹהֵי סְלִיחוֹת, סְלַח לָנוּ, מַחַל לָנוּ, כַּפֵּר-לָנוּ.  
*V'al kulam, Elo-ah s'lichot, s'lach lanu, m'chal lanu, kapper-lanu.*

---

God before whom we stand, we acknowledge our faults and our failings.  
Help us now to strengthen the good impulse within us.

*Help us to care about wrongs from which we have been spared;  
to seek forgiveness for the wrongs we shall do;  
to forgive the wrongs that are done to us.*

Create in us a clean heart, and place a willing spirit within us.

*Shed Your light upon us, O God,  
that we may see the goodness in each of Your children.*

---

### **Avinu Malkenu**

אָבִינוּ מִלְכֵנוּ *Avinu Malkeinu* - we join generations of Jews who have sought your compassion.

חֲנִינוּ וְעֲנִינוּ *Choneinu va'aneinu* - we open to You in self examination.  
Be present with us and inspire us. Assure us that we are not alone.

כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים *Ki ein banu ma'asim* - we approach You empty-handed.  
Our accomplishments set aside, we rather than defend ourselves, we confess.

עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד *Aseh imanu tz'dakah v'chesed* - embrace us generously as we expose our errors. Be our example as you turn us to face the world with justice and compassion.

וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ *V'hoshi'einu* - Save us. We join our strength to Yours as we offer ourselves fully to life ahead.

♪ אָבִינוּ מִלְכֵנוּ, חֲנִינוּ וְעֲנִינוּ, כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים. עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד, וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.  
*Avinu Malkeinu, choneinu va'aneinu, ki ein banu ma'asim. Aseh imanu tz'dakah v'chesed v'hoshi'einu.*

*Avinu Malkeiu*, however small our deeds, let us see their power to heal.  
May we save lives through compassion, generosity, and justice.

Our God and God of our fathers and mothers, let our prayers tonight be heard. Listen to our heartfelt thoughts. As we enter these Holy Days we confess that we have, indeed, been wrong at times. We are not so stubborn as to say before You that, "We have only done good; we have always behaved decently." We acknowledge our misdeeds and transgressions. However, we have also done many decent acts during this past year as well.

For the good that we have done in our world, whether by our own free will or because we were shamed or forced to do it,

*And for the good we have done when we softened our hearts.*

For the good we have done that we were unaware we had done,

*And for the good we do in this world with the clear intention of doing so, fully aware of the importance of our actions.*

For the good that we have done by honoring our loved, life partner,

*And for the good we do by random acts of love and kindness.*

For the good we have done which inspires others to do the same,

*And for the good that we have done secretly and in private.*

For the good we have done by helping other people in need,

*And for the good we do by sticking to principle when our integrity demands it.*

For the good we do by stating the truth with courage and conviction,

*And for the good we have done by using gentle words.*

For the good we do when we run to fulfill mitzvot,

*And for the good we do in this world by loving others without cause.*

For all the good deeds that we do, O God of Goodness, encourage us, support our efforts, and help us to do even better in the New Year ahead.



♪ אחת שאלתי מאת-יהוה אותה אבקש:

שבתתי בבית-יהוה, כל-ימי חיי, לחזות בנעם-יהוה, ולבקר בהיכלו. (Psalm 27)

*Achat sha'alti me'eit Adonai, otah avakesh:*

*shivti b'veit Adonai, kol y'mei chayai, lachazot b'no'am Adonai, u'l'vaker b'heikhalo.*

One thing I ask from Adonai, one thing I desire:

That I might dwell in Your house all the days of my life, to behold the graciousness of Adonai, and to enter God's sanctuary.

## Havdalah

### Wine

♪ ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.

*Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.*

Adonai, our God and sovereign, Source of blessings, You create the fruit of the vine.

### Spices

♪ ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא מיני בשמים.

*Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei minei v'samim.*

Adonai, our God and sovereign, Source of blessings, You create spices of every kind.

### Lights

♪ ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא מאורי האש.

*Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei m'orei ha'eish.*

Adonai, our God and sovereign, Source of blessings, You create the lights of fire.

### Separation

♪ ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, המבדיל בין קדש לחול.

המבדיל בין קדש לחול חטאתינו הוא ימחל זרענו ושלומנו ירבה פחול וכפוכבים בקלחה.

*Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam, hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol. Hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol chatoteinu hu yimchol zareinu ush'lomeinu yarbeh kachol v'chakochavim balailah.*

Adonai, our God and Sovereign, Source of blessings, You distinguish the holy from the everyday. As you separate sacred from profane, separate us from our wrongful ways. Give us a future - our children countless as grains of sand. Give us peace - majestic and beautiful as the starry night.

♪ שנה טובה...

*Shanah tovah*

A good year, a year of peace - May gladness reign and joy increase!

♪ אליהו הנביא, אליהו התשבי, אליהו, אליהו, אליהו הגלעדי.

במהרה במינו יבוא אלינו, עם משיח בן דוד, עם משיח בן דוד.

*Eliyahu hanavi, Eliyahu haTishbi, Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu HaGiladi.  
Bimheira v'yameinu yavo eileinu im mashiach ben-David, im mashiach ben-David.*

Elijah the Prophet, Elijah of Tishbi, Elijah of Gilead: may he come in our own time.

May he yet fulfill - with love - our hope: a world perfected and redeemed.