

בְּרֻכּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה

The person who is honored with an aliyah
recites the following before the Torah is read:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

The congregation responds:

בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

The person who is honored repeats the above response, then continues:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־תּוֹרָתוֹ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

The person who is honored recites the following after the Torah is read:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת, וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכָנוּ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

מִי שֶׁבֵּרַךְ לְעוֹלָה לַתּוֹרָה

For an individual:

מִי שֶׁבֵּרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבִרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ
שָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת
שְׂעִלָּה\שְׂעִלָּה הַיּוֹם לְכָבוֹד הַמָּקוֹם וְלְכָבוֹד הַתּוֹרָה,
וְלְכָבוֹד הַשָּׁבָת. הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִשְׁמַר אוֹתוֹ\אוֹתָהּ
וְאֶת־כָּל־מִשְׁפַּחָתוֹ\מִשְׁפַּחָתָהּ, וְיִשְׁלַח בָּרָכָה וְהַצְלָחָה
בְּכָל־מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו\יְדֵיהָ, עִם כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל אָחִיו
וְאֲחִיוֹתָיו\אֲחִיהָ וְאֲחִיתֶיהָ, וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן.

For a group of people:

מִי שֶׁבֵּרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבִרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ
שָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת כָּל־אֶלֶּה שְׂעִלָּה
הַיּוֹם לְכָבוֹד הַמָּקוֹם וְלְכָבוֹד הַתּוֹרָה, וְלְכָבוֹד הַשָּׁבָת.
הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִשְׁמַר אוֹתָם וְאֶת־כָּל־מִשְׁפַּחוֹתֵיהֶם
וְיִשְׁלַח בָּרָכָה וְהַצְלָחָה בְּכָל־מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם, עִם
כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲחֵיהֶם וְאֲחִיוֹתֵיהֶם, וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן.

For additional Mi Sheberakh prayers for special occasions, see pages 439–445.

THE READING. In the Land of Israel in the 1st millennium, the Torah was read on a cycle of three-and-a-half years and divided into more than 150 portions. In Babylonia, the Torah was divided into larger portions, called *parashiyot*, which are read in sequence on Shabbat mornings throughout a single year. (The number of these portions was eventually fixed at 54.) Because some years are leap years and in some years festivals fall on Shabbat, certain *parashiyot* may be read together, so that the weekly readings remain coordinated with the calendar. Today, we follow the Babylonian custom, though some congregations read one-third of each *parashah* each week, thus completing a full Torah reading in three years.

The trope, the musical notation with which the Torah is chanted, is the oldest form of musical notation still in use; it dates at least to the end of the 1st millennium. Trope serve as syntactical signposts and provide interpretive meaning to the text.

WHO HAS CHOSEN US בָּחַר בָּנוּ. At the moment of approaching the Torah, one may feel especially chosen and may also experience the moment as being directly commanded.

HAS GIVEN US . . . WHO GIVES THE TORAH וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־תּוֹרָתוֹ . . . נֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה. The Hebrew moves from the past tense to the present. The meaning of the words of Torah not only derive from the past, but each reading may offer a new revelation.

From Sephardic Practice

Before reciting the Torah blessings, the honoree(s) turn(s) to the congregation with a word of blessing (in accord with the language of greeting found in Ruth 2:4), and the congregation then responds in recognition:

Honoree(s):

יהוה עִמָּכֶם.

May God be with you.
Adonai imakhem.

Congregation:

יְבָרֵךְ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְבָרֵךְ
יְהוה.

May God bless you.
Y'varekh-kha/y'var'kheikh/
y'var'kheim Adonai.

Shabbat: Resting-Place on Our Journey

Each Shabbat is its own revelation, but each leads us further on the road to eternity. Each Shabbat is a resting place, an oasis on the journey that is the life of Torah. Each Shabbat's Torah reading looks forward to yet another week—another revelation.

Studying Torah

Once a young man who wanted to become a Hasid arrived at the court of Isaac Meir, the rebbe of Gur. The rabbi asked him if he had learned Torah. The young man didn't know what to answer. He had studied Torah but didn't want to appear too bold and answer "Yes," as if he knew all of Torah; nor could he say "No," for he would then be lying. So he responded, "I know a little." The rabbi replied, "Can anyone know more than a little?"

Blessings Recited by Those Called Up to the Torah

The person who is honored with an aliyah recites the following before the Torah is read:

Praise ADONAI, to whom all praise is directed.

Bar'khu et Adonai ha-m'vorakh.

The congregation responds:

Praise ADONAI, to whom all praise is directed forever and ever.

Barukh Adonai ha-m'vorakh l'olam va-ed.

The person who is honored repeats the above response, then continues:

Barukh atah ADONAI, our God, sovereign of time and space, who has chosen us from among all peoples, giving us the Torah.

Barukh atah ADONAI, who gives the Torah.

Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melek ha-olam,
asher baḥar banu mikol ha-amim, v'natan lanu et torato.
Barukh atah Adonai, noten ha-torah.

The person who is honored recites the following after the Torah is read:

Barukh atah ADONAI, our God, sovereign of time and space, who has given us a teaching of truth, planting eternal life in our midst.

Barukh atah ADONAI, who gives the Torah.

Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melek ha-olam,
asher natan lanu torat emet, v'ḥaye olam nata b'tokheinu.
Barukh atah Adonai, noten ha-torah.

Mi Sheberakh:

Blessing for Those Called to the Torah

May the one who blessed our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah,
bless _____,

who has/have ascended today to honor God
and the Torah and Shabbat.

May the blessed Holy One protect him/her/them
and his/her/their entire family, bring blessing
and success to all the works of his/her/their hands,
together with all his/her/their fellow Jews,
and let us say: *Amen*.

For additional Mi Sheberakh prayers for special occasions, see pages 439–445

מי שברך לחולים

מי שברך אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב,
ואמותינו שרה רבקה רחל ולאה,
הוא יברך וירפא את- [החולה\החולה\החולים]

(names of loved ones and friends may be added here)

בן\בת

הקדוש ברוך הוא ימלא רחמים

For a male:

עליו, להחזיקו ולרפאותו, וישלח לו

For a female:

עליה, להחזיקה ולרפאותה, וישלח לה

For a group:

עליהם, להחזיקם ולרפאותם, וישלח להם

מהרה רפואה שלמה מן השמים, רפואת הנפש
ורפואת הגוף, בתוך שאר החולים, וחזק את ידי
העוסקים בצרכיהם, שבת היא מלועזק ורפואה
קרובה לבוא, השתא בעגלא ובזמן קריב, ונאמר אמן.

הברכת הטוב

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם, הטוב והמטיב.

The congregation responds:

הודו ליהוה כי טוב, כי לעולם חסדו.

ברכת הגומל

This b'rakhah is recited by one who has recovered
from a serious illness or survived a life-threatening crisis.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם,
הגומל לחיבים טובות, שגמלני כל-טוב.

We respond for a male:

מי שגמלך כל-טוב, הוא יגמלך כל-טוב, סלה.

for a female:

מי שגמלך כל-טוב, הוא יגמלך כל-טוב, סלה.

for a group:

מי שגמלכם כל-טוב, הוא יגמלכם כל-טוב, סלה.

PRAYER FOR HEALING.

Traditionally, the prayer for healing is said in synagogue when the Torah is read.

Ellen Frankel, a contemporary writer, remarks that through the recitation of this prayer, we summon support from all those who care about our welfare.

Some follow the tradition of using only the mother's name, suggesting God's Shekhinah/In-dwelling "Feminine" aspect, which, according to our tradition, hovers over the bed of one who is ill and represents protection, care, and nurturing. (Simcha Weintraub)

ON JOYOUS OCCASIONS.

The rabbis of the Talmud insisted that recognizing the good in our lives was an important aspect of our worship of God and our own self-understanding and spiritual growth; they called this religious obligation *hakarat ha-tov* and formulated this blessing to be recited on these occasions (Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 54b). Abaye (late 3rd century, Babylonia) insisted that the *b'rakhah* be said in the presence of a *minyan*. In this spirit, we have included a line (from Psalm 136) to be recited as a congregational response.

בִּרְכַּת הַגּוֹמֵל. In thanking God for having been saved from danger and calamity, we are conscious of the fragility of our lives and the gratitude with which we should meet each day of our lives.

סֵלָה. The meaning of this biblical word is unclear. The ancient rabbis understood it to mean "forever."

Prayers for Healing

*Mi sheberakh avoteinu
m'kor ha-b'rakhah l'imoteinu,
May the Source of strength
who blessed the ones
before us
help us find the courage
to make our lives a blessing,
and let us say: Amen.*

*Mi sheberakh imoteinu
m'kor ha-b'rakhah la-avoteinu,
bless those in need of
healing
with r'fuah sh'leimah:
the renewal of body,
the renewal of spirit,
and let us say: Amen.*

—DEBBIE FRIEDMAN
AND DRORAH SETEL

Moses' Prayer

אל נא רפא נא
לה לוי להם.

God, please heal
her/him/them.

El na r'fa na lah/lo/lahem.

— based on NUMBERS 12:13

Meaning of Healing

Healing may be different than "cure." Healing is a process that concerns not only the physical aspect of our reality, but our mental, emotional, and spiritual states as well. We pray, in part, for inner peace, calm, a cessation of torment and suffering. The gift is to be able to deal with our fate, remain whole, and be at peace. This realization is important not only for the person who is ill but for caregivers as well, for they should know that they can be a source not only of cure but more especially of healing.

Mi Sheberakh: Prayer for Healing

May the one who blessed our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, bring blessing and healing to _____. May the Holy One mercifully restore him/her/them to health and vigor, granting him/her/them spiritual and physical well-being, together with all others who are ill, and may God grant strength to those who tend to them. Though Shabbat is a time to refrain from crying out, we yet hope and pray that healing is at hand. And let us say: *Amen*.

On Joyous Occasions

Barukh atah ADONAI, our God, sovereign of time and space, who is good and who bestows goodness.

Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, hatov v'hameitiv.

The congregation responds:

Offer thanks to ADONAI, for God is good; God's love endures forever.

Hodu l'adonai ki tov, ki l'olam hasdo.

Birkat Ha-Gomel: On Being Saved from Danger

This b'rakhah is recited by one who has recovered from a serious illness or survived a life-threatening crisis.

Barukh atah ADONAI, our God, sovereign of time and space, who bestows goodness on us despite our imperfections, and who has treated me so favorably.

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
ha-gomel l'hayavim tovot, she-g'malani kol tov.*

We respond:

May the one who has shown such favor to you continue to bestow all that is good upon you, forever.

for a male: Mi she-g'mal'kha kol tov, hu yigmolkha kol tov, selah.

for a female: Mi she-g'maleikh kol tov, hu yigm'leikh kol tov, selah.

for a group: Mi she-g'malkhem kol tov, yigmolkhem kol tov, selah.

Hatzi Kaddish is recited before the maftir aliyah is called to the Torah.

חֲצִי קַדִּישׁ

Leader:

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא, בְּעֶלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא, בְּרַעֲוִיתָהּ
וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּינוּ וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל־בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעָגְלָא וּבְזָמַן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

Congregation and Leader:

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלַם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא.

Leader:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא
וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקָדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא,
לְעָלְא מִן כָּל־ [לְעָלְא לְעָלְא מְכָל־] *[on Shabbat Shuvah we substitute:*
בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנִחַמְתָּא דְאִמְרִין בְּעֶלְמָא
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

הַגְבָּהַת הַתּוֹרָה

Two people are called up for Hagbah and Gelilah, lifting and tying the Sefer Torah. As the Torah is lifted, we rise and recite:

זֹאת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר שָׁם מֹשֶׁה לִפְנֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל,
עַל פִּי יְהוָה בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה.

is lifted here upon the conclusion of the reading. Out of respect, the congregation remains standing while the Torah is wrapped—a ceremony that imitates the practice of royalty.

THIS IS THE TORAH הַזֹּאת הַתּוֹרָה. The liturgists combined Deuteronomy 4:44 and Numbers 9:23 in this line, underscoring that our entire Torah came from Moses as dictated by God. This theological claim is not made in the Bible itself. Since this passage conflates two biblical verses, the 20th-century Orthodox Jewish thinker Joseph B. Soloveitchik, for instance, did not recite it.

When reciting this passage, some people hold up or kiss the *tzitzit* of their *tallit*, to affirm their own active fulfillment of the Torah.

HATZI KADDISH. A Kaddish is recited here to mark the completion of the required reading of the Torah; we now prepare for the reading of the *haftarah*, a reading taken from a different section of the Bible, the Prophets. So that the person called to chant the *haftarah* may also be honored with some words from the Torah scroll itself, another reading, called the *maftir* or "concluding reading," is added. On Shabbat it is usually a simple repetition of the last few verses of the required reading.

LIFTING AND WRAPPING THE TORAH. Tractate *Sofrim* (9th–10th century) instructs that the Torah be lifted, that three columns of text be unrolled, and that the writing be displayed to the entire congregation (14:8). In Sephardic practice this is done before the Torah reading begins; in Ashkenazic services the Torah

Revealed and Concealed

The Torah may be compared to a beautiful maiden, beautiful in form and appearance, concealed secretly in her palace. She has a single lover unknown to anyone—except to her.... Knowing that her lover is constantly circling her gate, what does she do? She opens a little window in that secret palace where she resides, reveals her face to her lover, and quickly withdraws, concealing herself.... So it is with a word of Torah: she reveals herself only to her lover. Torah knows that one who is wise of heart circles her gate every day. What does she do? From the palace, she reveals her face to the one who longs for her and signals a hint, then swiftly withdraws to her place, hiding away.... Thus Torah reveals and conceals herself, approaching her lover, lovingly arousing her lover.

—ZOHAR

Hatzi Kaddish is recited before the maftir aliyah is called to the Torah.

Hatzi Kaddish

Leader:

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

Congregation and Leader:

May God's great name be acknowledged forever and ever!
Y'hei sh'meih raba m'varakh l'alam u-l'almei almay.

Leader:

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

Lifting the Torah

Two individuals are called to raise and tie the Sefer Torah after it is read. As the Torah is lifted, we rise and recite:

This is the Torah, God's word by Moses' hand, which Moses set before the people Israel.

V'zot ha-torah asher sam moshe lifnei b'nei yisrael
al pi Adonai b'yad moshe.

בְּרָכָה לִפְנֵי הַהִפְטָרָה
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בְּנְבִיאִים טוֹבִים,
 וְרָצָה בְּדִבְרֵיהֶם הַנֶּאֱמָרִים בְּאַמֶּת.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַבּוֹחֵר בַּתּוֹרָה וּבַמִּשְׁנָה עֲבָדֶיךָ
 וּבִישְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ וּבְנְבִיאֵי הָאֱמֶת וְצִדִּיק.

בְּרָכוֹת לְאַחֵר הַהִפְטָרָה
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, צוּר כָּל־הָעוֹלָמִים
 צָדִיק בְּכָל־הַדּוֹרוֹת, הָאֵל הַנֶּאֱמָן הַאֲמִיר וְעֹשֶׂה, הַמְדַּבֵּר
 וּמְקַיֵּם, שְׁכָל־דִּבְרֵיו אֱמֶת וְצִדִּיק. נֶאֱמָן אַתָּה הוּא יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְנֶאֱמָנִים דִּבְרֵיךָ, וְדַבֵּר אֶחָד מִדִּבְרֵיךָ אַחֲרָיִךְ לֹא
 יֵשׁוּב רִיקָם, כִּי אֵל מֶלֶךְ נֶאֱמָן וְרַחֲמָן אַתָּה.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הָאֵל הַנֶּאֱמָן בְּכָל־דִּבְרָיו.

רַחֵם עַל צִיּוֹן כִּי הִיא בֵּית חַיִּינוּ, וְלַעֲלוּבָת נַפְשׁ תּוֹשִׁיעַ
 בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְשַׁמֵּחַ צִיּוֹן בְּבִנְיָהּ.
 שְׁמַחְנוּ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַלְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא עֲבָדֶיךָ וּבְמַלְכוּת
 בֵּית דָּוִד מְשִׁיחָךָ בְּמַהֲרָה יָבֹא וְיִגַּל לָבְנוּ. עַל כִּסְאוֹ לֹא
 יֵשֵׁב זָר וְלֹא יִנָּחֲלוּ עוֹד אַחֵרִים אֶת־כְּבוֹדוֹ, כִּי בְשֵׁם
 קֹדֶשְׁךָ נִשְׁפָּעֶת לּוֹ שְׁלֹא יִכָּבֵה נֵרוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מֶגֶן דָּוִד.

עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוּדָה וְעַל הַנְּבִיאִים וְעַל יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת
 הַזֶּה שְׁנַתָּה לָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְקֹדֶשׁהּ וּלְמִנוּחָהּ, לְכָבוֹד
 וּלְתַפְאֲרָתָהּ. עַל הַכָּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ,
 וּמְבָרְכִים אוֹתָךְ. יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמֶךָ בְּפִי כָּל־חַי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם
 וָעֶד. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת.

and to the left is another one containing the five scrolls read on festivals, Tishah B'av, and Purim.

B'RAKHOT AFTER THE HAFTARAH. A series of *b'rahot* concludes the reading from the Prophets. The earliest synagogue services probably centered on the public reading of biblical passages, and so the prayers concluding the *haftarah* reading may have constituted the core of the most ancient synagogue service. These prayers mention the sanctity of the day, express messianic longing, and speak of God's faithfulness in keeping the divine promise—themes also included in the Amidah for Shabbat.

HAFTARAH. The Hebrew Bible is composed of three divisions, in descending order of revelation: (1) the Five Books of Moses, known as the Torah; (2) the Prophets, both the historical books from Judges through Kings and the three major and twelve minor prophets; and (3) the Writings, including Psalms, the Five Megillot, Job, Proverbs, Daniel, and the late historical works of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. In the ancient synagogue in the Land of Israel, passages were read from all three sections on each Shabbat. Probably because of time constraints, the custom of a third reading died away, and today we read only from the Torah and the Prophets. The latter reading is called the *haftarah*, meaning "the parting" or "the conclusion," and it usually complements themes in the day's Torah reading. The custom of reading from the Writings remains on the festivals: on the intermediate Shabbat of Pesah we read the Song of Songs, on Shavuot we read the Scroll of Ruth, and on Sukkot we read Ecclesiastes.

The *haftarah* need not be read from a parchment scroll. Some older synagogues, though, have two smaller arks beside the main ark containing the Torah scrolls. To the right is a recess containing a scroll of the prophetic readings

Priest and Prophet

Indeed, the sort of crimes and even the amount of delinquency that fill the prophets of Israel with dismay do not go beyond that which we regard as normal, as typical ingredients of social dynamics. To us a single act of injustice—cheating in business, exploitation of the poor—is slight; to the prophets, a disaster. To us injustice is injurious to the welfare of the people to the prophets it is a deathblow to existence: to us, an episode; to them, a catastrophe, a threat to the world.

—ABRAHAM JOSHUA
HESCHEL

It is otherwise with the Priest. He appears on the scene at a time when prophecy has already succeeded in hewing out a path for its idea The Priest also fosters the idea and desires to perpetuate it; but he is not of the race of giants. He has not the strength to fight continually against necessity and actuality; his tendency is rather to bow to the one and come to terms with the other. . . . Not what ought to be, but what can be is what he seeks.

—AḤAD HA-AM
(translated by Leon Simon)

B'rakhah Before the Haftarah

Barukh atah ADONAI, our God, sovereign of time and space, who chose worthy prophets and was pleased by their words, spoken in faithfulness.

Barukh atah ADONAI, who has chosen the Torah, Your servant Moses, Your people Israel, and the prophets of truth and justice.

B'rakhot After the Haftarah

Barukh atah ADONAI, our God, sovereign of time and space, eternal protector, righteous in all generations, the faithful God who fulfills what is promised, who accomplishes what is spoken, whose every word is true and just. Faithful are You, ADONAI, and Your words are trustworthy; not one of Your words will prove empty, for You are a faithful and compassionate sovereign.

Barukh atah ADONAI, God who faithfully fulfills all Your words.

Show compassion to Zion, our true home, and speedily, in our time, bring deliverance to those sad in spirit.

Barukh atah ADONAI, who makes Zion happy with her children.

Make us joyful, ADONAI our God, with Elijah the prophet, Your servant, and with the kingdom of David, Your anointed—may he soon come, making our hearts rejoice. May no stranger sit on his throne and may no other inherit his glory, for You have promised him, by Your holy name, that his light shall never be extinguished.

Barukh atah ADONAI, Shield of David.

For all this we thank You and praise You, ADONAI our God: for the Torah, for the ability to worship, for the prophets, for the Shabbat that You have given us, ADONAI our God, for holiness and for rest, for honor and for glory. May Your name be blessed by all that is living, always and forever, and may Your promise prove true and everlasting.

Barukh atah ADONAI, who makes Shabbat holy.

יְקוּם פִּרְקוֹן מִן שְׁמִיָּא, חֲנָא וְחֲסִידָא וְרַחֲמֵי וְחֵי אֲרִיכִי
 וּמְזוּנֵי רוּחֵי וְסִיעֵתָא דְשְׁמִיָּא, וּבְרִיּוֹת גּוּפָא וּנְהוּרָא
 מַעֲלִיָּא, זִרְעָא חַיָּא וְקִימָא, זִרְעָא דִּי לֹא יִפְסֹק, וְדִי
 לֹא יִבְטֹל, מִפְתָּגְמֵי אוּרִיתָא, לְכָל־קְהָלָא קְדִישָׁא הָדִין,
 רַבְרַבֵּיָּא עִם זַעֲרִיָּא. מַלְכָּא דְעֵלְמָא יְבָרַךְ יִתְכוֹן, יִפִּישׁ
 חַיִּיכוֹן, וְיִסְגָּא יוֹמֵיכוֹן וְיִתֵּן אֲרָכָא לְשִׁנֵּיכוֹן, וְתִתְפָּרְקוּן
 וְתִשְׁתַּזְבּוּן, מִן כָּל־עֲקָא, וּמִן כָּל־מַרְעִין בִּישׁוֹן.
 מִן דִּי בְשְׁמִיָּא יִהְיֶה בְּסַעֲדִיכוֹן, כָּל־זְמַן וְעַדָּן,
 וְנֹאמֵר: אָמֵן.

מִי שְׁבִרְךָ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבִרְהֵם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ
 שָׂרָה רַבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, הוּא יְבָרַךְ אֶת כָּל־הַקְהָל
 הַקְדוֹשׁ הַזֶּה, עִם כָּל־קְהָלוֹת הַקְדָּשׁ, הֵם וּמִשְׁפְּחוֹתֵיהֶם
 וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם, וּמִי שְׁמִיחִידִים בְּתֵי כְּבִסִּיּוֹת לְתַפְלָה,
 וּמִי שְׂפָאִים בְּתוֹכָם לְהַתְפַּלֵּל, וּמִי שְׁנוֹתָנִים נֹר לְמֵאוֹר
 וְיִין לְקְדוֹשׁ וּלְהַבְדִּילָהּ, וּפֶת לְאוֹרְחִים וְלָחֵם לְרַעֲבִים
 וְצִדְקָה לְעִנְיָיִם וּמִכָּסָה לְחַיִּים בְּרַחוּב, ◀ וְכָל־מִי
 שְׁעוֹסְקִים בְּצָרְכֵי צָבוֹר וּבְבִגְנִין אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֲמוֹנָה.
 הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִשְׁלַם שְׂכָרָם, וְיִסִּיר מֵהֶם כָּל־מַחֲלָה,
 וְיִרְפָּא לְכָל־גּוּפָם, וְיִסְלַח לְכָל־עוֹנָם, וְיִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה
 וְהַצְלָחָה בְּכָל־מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם, עִם כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל אַחֵיהֶם
 וְאַחֵיּוֹתֵיהֶם, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS.

The Torah service became an occasion for expressing communal concerns. Y'kum Purkan is written in Aramaic, the common language of Jewish communities of the Eastern Mediterranean and Babylonia during much of the 1st millennium. It originated in Babylonia and the text has evolved over time. It petitions God on behalf of the local synagogue community, and is followed by a Hebrew prayer (Mi Sheberakh) of similar purpose. The first prayer expresses the hope that all may enjoy long, prosperous lives; the second singles out those who give of their means and time to support Jewish communal institutions and needy individuals.

An Alternate Prayer for the Community

May the one who blessed our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, bless this holy congregation, men and women, sons and daughters, and all that is ours. May it be Your will to bless us, to hear our voices raised in prayer, and to protect us from any trouble and difficulty. Spread over us the divine canopy of peace and plant within us love and unity, peace and friendship; banish all hate among us. May the words of Torah be fulfilled: "Do not wrong one another, but fear your God . . . that you may dwell upon the land securely" (Leviticus 25:17-18). And so may it be Your will, and let us say: *Amen*.

Community

The individual . . . and group must learn to overcome those tendencies toward selfishness and antagonism, and re-orient their minds to see life not as a hunt for pleasure, but as an engagement for service; not as a race involving victories and defeat, but as a pursuit of goals that transcend the interests of single nations and generations.

—LOUIS FINKELSTEIN

A Prayer for the Congregation

May heaven bestow deliverance on this holy congregation, the adults and their children: may kindness, love, and compassion, a long life, abundant provision, and sustenance from heaven, bodily health, and spiritual enlightenment be their lot. May their children thrive, never ceasing to speak words of Torah nor ever neglecting them. May the sovereign of the universe bless you, accord you a full life, add to your days, and grant you a long life. May you be freed of all distress and difficult circumstance, now and always. May the master in heaven sustain you at all times and seasons, and let us say: *Amen*.

A Prayer for Those Who Serve the Community

May the one who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, bless this entire congregation, together with all other holy congregations: **they**, their families, and all that is theirs; along with those who devote themselves to establish synagogues for prayer, as well as those who enter them to pray, and those who provide for their maintenance, wine for Kiddush and Havdalah, food for guests, bread for the hungry, tzedakah for the poor, and shelter for the homeless; ► and all who faithfully devote themselves to the needs of this community and the Land of Israel. May the Holy One reward them, remove sickness from them, heal them, and forgive their sins. May God bless them by making all their worthy endeavors prosper, as well as those of the entire people Israel, their brothers and sisters. And let us say: *Amen*.

תפלה לשלום הארץ

רבוננו של עולם, אשר בידך נפש כל־חי ורוח כל־בשר
איש, הנחילנו שבת מנוחה, יום לשבות בו מכל־
מלאכה. בכל־תחושה, נפיר ונדע את־הוד יצירתך.
שבענו מטובך שנהיה עדים לגדל מעשיך. חזקנו
להיות עמך שותפים נאמנים, לשמור על עולמך
בעבור הדורות הבאים. יהי רצון מלפניך יהוה
אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו ואמותינו, שתברך את־עולמך
בימינו כימי קדם.

תפלה לשלום המדינה

אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו ואמותינו, קבל נא ברחמים
את־תפלתנו בעד ארצנו וממשלתה. הִרַק את־ברכתך
על הארץ הזאת, על תושביה, על ראשה, שופטיה,
ופקידיה העוסקים בצרכי צבור באמונה. הביט
משפטי צדקך למען לא יסורו מארצנו שלום ושלום,
אשר וחפש כל־הימים.

אנא יהוה, אלהי הרוחות לכל־בשר, שלח רוחך על
כל־תושבי ארצנו. עקר מלבנו שנאה ואיבה, קנאה
ותחרות, וטע בין בני האמות והאמונות השונות
השוכנים בזה אהבה ואחוה, שלום ורעות. כי עד צדק
ישוב משפט בבתי דיננו, וחזנו מאתך דעה לשפט
בצדק ובבינה, לפעל בחסד וברחמים, בשכל טוב
ובאמץ לב, לעקור עניות מארצנו.

ובכן יהי רצון מלפניך שתהי ארצנו ברכה לכל־יושבי
תבל, ותשרה ביניהם רעות וחרות, וקנים במהרה
חזון נביאיה: לא ישא גוי אל גוי חרב ולא ילמדו עוד
מלחמה. ונאמר: כי כולם ידעו אותי למקטנם ועד
גדולם. ונאמר אמן.

PRAYER FOR THE RENEWAL OF CREATION.

Concerns about our environment are as much a part of our consciousness as are the issues that were historically raised in this part of the service. This prayer, written by Daniel Nevins, expresses the hope that by ceasing to labor on Shabbat, by being able to appreciate and be grateful for life and its gifts, we will increase our awareness of the need to be responsible caretakers of the natural world.

PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY.

It has been customary since medieval times to include in the liturgy a prayer for the welfare of the government. Secure governments were seen as providing safety for the Jewish community, and a biblical warrant for such prayers was found in Jeremiah's instruction to Israel to "seek the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you and pray to Adonai on its behalf; for in its prosperity you shall prosper" (29:7). Early versions of this prayer referred to God as "the one who gives dominion to kings" and reflected the anxiety that Jews felt as a beleaguered minority. The text here is based on a prayer composed in the 1920s by Professor Louis Ginzberg, which transforms what had formerly been "A Prayer for the Government" into "A Prayer for Our Country" and for its people, the source of authority in a democracy.

Whereas earlier prayers asked that the monarch be compassionate to the Jewish people, this prayer expresses the hope that the leaders of the country will be fair and just to all, helping to bring the world closer to a vision of peace and justice. The prayer ends with two prophetic verses: Isaiah 2:4 ("Nation shall not lift up sword...") and Jeremiah 31:33 ("For all of them ...").

Alternative Prayer for Our Country

Our God and God of our ancestors, grant to our country the will and wherewithal to fulfill its calling to justice, liberty, and equality.

May each of us fulfill our responsibilities of citizenship with care, generosity, and gratitude, ever conscious of the extraordinary blessing of freedom, ever mindful of our duties to one another. Bless those who volunteer to labor on behalf of us all; may they find the strength and courage to complete their tasks and fulfill their dreams.

May our judges, elected leaders, and all who hold public office exercise their responsibilities with wisdom, fairness, and justice for all. Fill them with love and kindness, and bless them that they may walk with integrity on the paths of peace and righteousness.

Creator and protector of all, watch over our armed forces and all those entrusted with our safety, as they daily put their lives at risk to protect us and our freedoms. Be with them in times of danger; give them courage to act with honor and dignity, as well as insight to do what is right in Your eyes.

Fill us all with the gifts of love and courage, that we may create a world that reflects Your glory. May we each respond to the charge of Your prophet, "For what does Adonai demand of You—but to act justly, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with Your God" (Micah 6:8). May the one who brings peace on high bring peace and prosperity to our world and keep us in safety. And let us say: *Amen*.

A Prayer for the Renewal of Creation

Master of the universe, in whose hand is the breath of all life and the soul of every person, grant us the gift of Shabbat, a day of rest from all our labors. With all of our senses may we perceive the glory of Your works. Fill us with Your goodness, that we may attest to Your great deeds. Strengthen us to become Your faithful partners, preserving the world for the sake of future generations. ► ADONAI our God and God of our ancestors, may it be Your will to renew Your blessing of the world in our day, as You have done from the beginning of time.

A Prayer for Our Country

Our God and God of our ancestors, with mercy accept our prayer on behalf of our country and its government. Pour out Your blessing upon this land, upon its inhabitants, upon its leaders, its judges, officers, and officials, who faithfully devote themselves to the needs of the public. Help them understand the rules of justice You have decreed, so that peace and security, happiness and freedom, will never depart from our land.

ADONAI, God whose spirit is in all creatures, we pray that Your spirit be awakened within all the inhabitants of our land. Uproot from our hearts hatred and malice, jealousy and strife. Plant love and companionship, peace and friendship, among the many peoples and faiths who dwell in our nation. Grant us the knowledge to judge justly, the wisdom to act with compassion, and the understanding and courage to root out poverty from our land.

May it be Your will that our land be a blessing to all who dwell on earth, and may You cause all peoples to dwell in friendship and freedom. Speedily fulfill the vision of Your prophets: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." "For all of them, from the least of them to the greatest, shall know Me." And let us say: *Amen*.

תפלה לשלום מדינת ישראל

אבינו שבשמים, צור ישראל וגואלו, ברוך את מדינת
ישראל [שתהא] ראשית צמיחת גאלתנו. הגן עליה
באברת חסדך ופרש עליה סבת שלומך, ושלח אורך
ואמתך לראשיה שריה ויועציה, ותקנם בעצה טובה
מלפניה. חזק את ידי מגני ארץ קדשנו, והנחילם
אלהינו ישועה, ועטרת נצחון תעטרים. ונתת שלום
בארץ ושמחת עולם ליושביה, ונאמר: אמן.

תפלה לשלום

יהי רצון מלפניך יהוה אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו ואמותינו
שתבטל מלחמות ושפיכות דמים מן העולם
ותשבין שלום בעולם,
ולא ישא גוי אל גוי חרב ולא ילמדו עוד מלחמה.

יכירו וידעו כל יושבי תבל
שלא באנו לעולם בשביל ריב ומחלוקת,
ולא בשביל שנאה וקנאה וקנתור ושפיכות דמים.
רק באנו לעולם כדי להפיר אותך, תתברך לנצח.

ובכן תרחם עלינו ויקים בנו מקרא שכתוב:
ונתתי שלום בארץ ושכבתם ואין מחריד,
והשבתי חיה רעה מן הארץ וחרב לא תעבר בארצכם
ויגל כמים משפט, וצדקה בנחל איתן.
כי מלאה הארץ דעה אתיהוה כמים לים מכסים.

PRAYER FOR THE STATE OF
ISRAEL. Upon Israel's inde-
pendence in 1948, many
prayers were circulated
for the well-being of the
new state. This one was
composed by Israel's chief
rabbi and was then slightly
edited by the writer
S.Y. Agnon.

שְׁתֵּהא THAT IT MAY BE
This Hebrew word was
added by the Chief Rabbi
of England, Immanuel Jako-
bovits, turning the phrase
"the beginning of the re-
demption" into an expres-
sion of hope, rather than a
statement of fact.

A PRAYER FOR PEACE.
Rabbi Nathan Sternharz,
a student of the Hasidic
master Nahman of Bratzlav
(1772-1810, Ukraine),
recorded this prayer. The
version here has been
adapted and translated by
Jules Harlow.

NATION WILL NOT THREATEN
לא ישא גוי. Isaiah 2:4.

I WILL BRING PEACE ונתתי
שלום. Leviticus 26:6.

LET JUSTICE AND RIGH-
TEOUSNESS FLOW ויגל כמים
משפט. Amos 5:24.

FILL THE EARTH כי מלאה
הארץ. Isaiah 11:9.

*A Prayer for the
State of Israel*

רְבוּנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, קַבֵּל
נָא בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן
אֶת-הַפְּלוֹחֵינוּ בְּעֵד
מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Sovereign of the universe,
accept in lovingkindness
and with favor our prayers
for the State of Israel, her
government, and all who
dwell within her boundar-
ies and under her authority.

Open our eyes and our
hearts to the wonder of
Israel, and strengthen our
faith in Your power to
work redemption in every
human soul. Grant us also
the fortitude to keep ever
before us those ideals upon
which the State of Israel
was founded. Grant cour-
age, wisdom, and strength
to those entrusted with
guiding Israel's destiny
to do Your will. Be with
those on whose shoulders
Israel's safety depends and
defend them from all harm.
Spread over Israel and all
the world Your shelter of
peace, and may the vision
of Your prophet soon be
fulfilled: "Nation shall not
lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war
anymore" (Isaiah 2:4).

לֹא יִשָּׂא גּוֹי אֶל גּוֹי חֶרֶב
וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה.

A Prayer for the State of Israel

Avinu she-ba-shamayim, stronghold and redeemer of the
people Israel: Bless the State of Israel, [that it may be] the
beginning of our redemption. Shield it with Your love; spread
over it the shelter of Your peace. Guide its leaders and advi-
sors with Your light and Your truth. Help them with Your
good counsel. Strengthen the hands of those who defend our
holy land. Deliver them; crown their efforts with triumph.
Bless the land with peace and its inhabitants with lasting joy.
And let us say: *Amen*.

A Prayer for Peace

May we see the day when war and bloodshed cease,
when a great peace will embrace the whole world.

*Then nation will not threaten nation,
and the human family will not again know war.*

For all who live on earth shall realize
we have not come into being to hate or to destroy.
We have come into being to praise, to labor, and to love.

*Compassionate God, bless the leaders of all nations
with the power of compassion.*

Fulfill the promise conveyed in Scripture:

I will bring peace to the land,
and you shall lie down and no one shall terrify you.

*I will rid the land of vicious beasts
and it shall not be ravaged by war.*

Let justice and righteousness flow like a mighty stream.
Let God's peace fill the earth as the waters fill the sea.
And let us say: *Amen*.

The Months of the Year



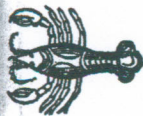
NISAN (30 days), the month in which the people Israel were redeemed from Egypt, is designated in Exodus (12:2) as the first month of the year and it is the starting point of the festival cycle. Because the Torah also calls it *hodesh ha-aviv*, the springtime month (Deuteronomy 16:1), the Hebrew calendar is adjusted to ensure that Nisan always falls in late March and April, around the time of the spring equinox (see *Adar* below). The Mishnah (Rosh Hashanah 1:1) indicates that Nisan is one of four “new years” in the calendar: Nisan is the new year for determining festivals, and also the month that marks the beginning of a king’s reign. Pesah begins on the 15th, and Yom HaShoah is observed on the 27th. It consists of 30 days, and its symbol is the ram, *taleh*.



IYAR (29 days) mostly coincides with the month of May. Iyar is especially associated with the State of Israel: Yom HaZikaron (Israeli Memorial Day), Yom HaAtzmaut (Israeli Independence Day) and Yom Yerushalayim are all observed in Iyar. In addition, Lag Ba-omer, the celebratory day in the midst of the counting of the *omer*, occurs on the 18th of Iyar. Iyar’s symbol is the bull, *shor*.



SIVAN (30 days) occurs during the months of May and June, already summer in the Land of Israel. The sixth of Sivan is celebrated as the Festival of Shavuot (and, outside the Land of Israel, the seventh as well) and marks an end to the counting of the *omer*. Sivan’s symbol is the twins, *te’omim*.



TAMMUZ (29 days) is most frequently the time of the summer solstice. The 17th of Tammuz marks the time of the breaching of the wall of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (587/586 B.C.E) and the second conquest by the Romans under Titus in 70 C.E., and begins a period of three weeks of mourning, marked by special *haftarot*. A midrashic tradition places on that same day Moses’ smashing of the first set of tablets in response to the golden calf. Tammuz’s symbol is a crustacean, *sartan*.



AV (30 days) occurs in mid-summer. The period of mourning that began on Tammuz 17 intensifies in Av, culminating in the fast of Tishah B’Av (“the ninth of Av”), commemorating the destruction of both Temples, the expulsion from Spain, and other times of Jewish persecution and martyrdom. This fast is the most severe in the Jewish calendar, save for Yom Kippur itself. The Shabbat following Tishah B’Av is called Shabbat Naḥamu (the Shabbat of Consolation), and is the first of seven Shabbatot of comfort (each with a special *haftarah*) leading up to Rosh Hashanah. The month is therefore sometimes called Menaḥem Av (Av the Comforter). Its symbol is the lion, *aryeh*.



ELUL (29 days) most often begins in August and continues into September. A rabbinic tradition has it that Moses went up Mount Sinai a second time at the beginning of Elul to pray that God forgive the people for the sin of the golden calf; he came down forty days later on Yom Kippur, having attained atonement. The rabbis saw a hint of this reconciliation between God and the people in the name of the month, whose letters spell the acronym *ani l’dodi v’dodi li*, “I am for my beloved and my beloved is for me” (Song of Songs 6:3). Over time, Elul became a month of preparation for the High Holy Days, with the shofar sounded daily. Elul’s symbol is the virgin, *b’tulah*.



TISHREI (30 days) almost always begins in September, at the time of the fall equinox. Although in one system of counting it is the seventh month, the Mishnah (Rosh Hashanah 1:1) indicates that Tishrei is the month that begins a new calendar year, and a new agricultural cycle; indeed its name derives from the Aramaic word meaning “to begin.” Therefore, Rosh Hashanah is observed on the 1st and 2nd of Tishrei; Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Sh’mini Atzeret and Simḥat Torah all follow in the same month. Tishrei’s symbol is that of a balance scale, *moznayim*.



HESHVAN or **MARḤESHVAN** almost always begins in October; it is one of two months whose length varies from year to year, either 29 or 30 days, to ensure that the holidays fall on certain days (e.g., Yom Kippur can never fall on Friday or Sunday, because that would interfere with the proper observance of Shabbat). It is the only month of the year without major holidays or fast days. Its symbol is the scorpion, *akrav*.



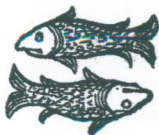
KISLEV usually begins during the month of November; like the previous month, the number of days varies between 29 and 30. Kislev is the darkest month of the year, but it is also the month in which we light the menorah in celebration of Hanukkah, beginning on the 25th of the month. Its symbol is the bow, *keshet*, perhaps evoking the rainbow (*keshet*) shown to Noah after the flood, which according to some commentators ended on the 28th of Kislev.



TEVET (29 days) almost always begins in December and usually extends into January, and usually includes the winter solstice. The tenth of the month commemorates the siege of Jerusalem begun by Nebuchadnezzar that eventually led to the capture of the city and the Babylonian exile of Judah. Its symbol is that of a goat, *g’di*.



SHEVAT (30 days) begins in January and most often extends into February, early spring in the Land of Israel. The Mishnah (Rosh Hashanah 1:1) indicates that Shevat is the new year for the trees. Therefore, during this month we observe Tu B’Shevat (“the fifteenth of Shevat”), a day to celebrate trees and the natural world. Its symbol is a bucket of water, *d’li*, perhaps indicating the abundance of water after the winter rains and the richness of the soil at this time.



ADAR occurs in February and March. Purim is celebrated on the 14th (in Jerusalem it is celebrated on the 15th), preceded by the Fast of Esther on the 13th. Rabbinic lore teaches that when Adar begins, joy increases. Because the lunar calendar of twelve months is slightly shorter than the solar year, the Hebrew calendar intercalates a full month seven times in a nineteen-year cycle; this ensures that Pesah will always occur in the spring. When a new month is added, there are two months of Adar—Adar I and Adar II. Purim is celebrated in Adar II. Adar’s symbol is fish, *dagim*. It normally consists of 29 days; in a leap year Adar I consists of 30 days.

The circuit of the months of the year is marked by the dominance of different constellations of the stars. Synagogues were often adorned with images of these constellations, as if in entering the synagogue one had ascended to heaven. This page illustrates the months of the year and their associated symbols, which have decorated synagogues through the ages.

בְּרֶפֶת הַחֹדֶשׁ

*Recited on the Shabbat before Rosh Hodesh (except Tishrei).
We rise.*

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ,
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ],
שֶׁתַּחֲדֹשׁ עֲלֵינוּ אֶת-הַחֹדֶשׁ הַבֹּא
לְטוֹבָה וְלִבְרָכָה,
וְתַתֵּן-לָנוּ חַיִּים אֲרָבִים, חַיִּים שֶׁל שְׁלוֹם,
חַיִּים שֶׁל טוֹבָה, חַיִּים שֶׁל בְּרָכָה,
חַיִּים שֶׁל פְּרֻנְסָה, חַיִּים שֶׁל חֵלוּץ עֲצָמוֹת,
חַיִּים שֶׁיֵּשׁ בָּהֶם יִרְאֵת שָׁמַיִם וְיִרְאֵת חֹטָא,
חַיִּים שֶׁאֵין בָּהֶם בּוֹשָׁה וּכְלָמָה,
חַיִּים שֶׁל עֶשֶׂר וְכִבּוֹד,
חַיִּים שֶׁתֵּהָא בָּנוּ אֶהְבֵּת תּוֹרָה וְיִרְאֵת שָׁמַיִם,
חַיִּים שֶׁיִּמְלָאוּ מִשְׁאָלוֹת לִבֵּנוּ לְטוֹבָה, אָמֵן סָלָה.

*The Sefer Torah is brought forward, and the leader
holds it while announcing the new month:*

מִי שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ [וְלִאִמּוֹתֵינוּ], וְגָאֵל אוֹתָם
מֵעֲבָדוֹת לְחֵרוֹת, הוּא יִגָּאֵל אוֹתָנוּ בְּקֶרֶב, וְיִקְבֹּץ
נִדְחֵינוּ מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנָפוֹת הָאָרֶץ, חִבְרִים כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְנֹאמֵר: אָמֵן.

רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ _____ יְהִיָּה בַּיּוֹם _____ הַבֹּא
עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל לְטוֹבָה.

*The congregation repeats the announcement
of the month, and the leader then continues:*

יְחַדְּשֵׁהוּ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עֲלֵינוּ
וְעַל כָּל-עַמּוֹ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
לְחַיִּים וּלְשְׁלוֹם, אָמֵן,
לְשִׁשׁוֹן וּלְשִׁמְחָה, אָמֵן,
לִישׁוּעָה וּלְנִחְמָה, וְנֹאמֵר: אָמֵן.

THE HEBREW CALENDAR.

Since biblical times the Hebrew calendar has been based on the lunar year. Months were declared by the sighting of the new moon. The Mishnah describes an elaborate system of communication whereby the sighting of the new moon was announced from hilltop to hilltop by lighting signal fires (Rosh Hashanah 2:2–4). In the middle of the 1st millennium a perpetual calendar was instituted and the declaration of the month was no longer made on the basis of visual sighting. The time of the new month could then be announced in advance, in the synagogue. The Hebrew calendar runs on a nineteen-year cycle. Lunar months are actually 29½ days, so some months are 29 and others 30 days. The lunar year is 354 days, and in order to keep the lunar calendar in sync with the solar year, an extra lunar month—a second Adar—is added in the spring, seven times during the nineteen-year cycle.

BESTOW ON US שֶׁתַּחֲדֹשׁ עֲלֵינוּ. The Babylonian Talmud (Berakhot 16b) mentions that this prayer was recited by Rav (3rd century) as a conclusion to the Amidah. Later liturgists incorporated it as a prayer for the new moon.

CONSCIOUS OF HEAVEN'S DEMANDS שָׁמַיִם יְרֵאָה. Literally, "the fear of heaven." This common rabbinic phrase has many shades of

meaning. It implies a consciousness of God's presence in one's life, so that one does that which is right in the eyes of God.

Prayer for the New Month

May the new month bring
renewal to our lives:
a renewal of wonder
a renewal of freedom
a renewal of love
a renewal of justice
a renewal of friendship
a renewal of holiness.
Amen.

Renewal

The midrash teaches that while the Israelites were still in Egypt, God showed Moses the new moon, saying, "When the moon renews itself like this, it will be the beginning of the month for you." The German Orthodox thinker Samson Raphael Hirsch understood this as a sign that the Jewish people would continually renew itself. Just as the rainbow was a sign to Noah that humanity would have a new future, in the same way, in Egypt, at the threshold of the new Jewish future, God called Moses and Aaron into the open, showed them the silver crescent of the new moon, and said, "The renewal of this moon is a sign of the call to continuous renewal."

Announcing the New Month

*Recited on the Shabbat before Rosh Hodesh (except Tishrei).
We rise.*

May it be Your will,
ADONAI our God and God of our ancestors,
grant that this month bring us
goodness and blessing,
and bestow on us a long life,
a life that is peaceful,
a life that is good,
a life that is blessed,
a life with proper sustenance,
a life with physical vitality,
a life conscious of heaven's demands and wary of sin,
a life free of shame and reproach,
a life of abundance and honor,
a life of love of Torah, conscious of heaven's demands,
a life in which the worthy desires of our hearts are fulfilled.
Amen.

*The Sefer Torah is brought forward, and the leader
holds it while announcing the new month:*

May God who wrought miracles for our ancestors, redeeming them from slavery to freedom, redeem us soon and gather our dispersed from the four corners of the earth. May the entire people Israel be united in friendship, and let us say: *Amen.*

The new month of _____ will begin on _____.
May it hold blessing for us and for all the people Israel.
Rosh Hodesh _____ yihyeh b'yom _____ haba aleinu v'al
kol yisrael l'tovah.

*The congregation repeats the announcement
of the month, and the leader then continues:*

May the Holy One bless this new month
for us and for the entire people, the house of Israel,
with life and peace, *Amen*
joy and gladness, *Amen*
deliverance and consolation. And let us say: *Amen.*
Y'hadsheihu ha-kadosh barukh hu aleinu v'al kol amo beit yisrael,
l'hayim u-l'shalom, (amen,) l'sason u-l'simhah, (amen.)
lishuah u-l'nehamah, v'nomar: amen.

אֲשֶׁרִי יוֹשְׁבֵי בֵיתְךָ, עוֹד יִהְיֶה לְךָ סֶלָה.
אֲשֶׁרִי הָעַם שְׂפָכָה לָּךְ, אֲשֶׁרִי הָעַם שִׁיהוּה אֱלֹהֶינוּ.

תהלה לדוד

אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ, וְאֶבְרַכְּךָ שִׁמְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
בְּכָל־יּוֹם אֶבְרַכְּךָ, וְאֶהְלֶלְךָ שִׁמְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
גָּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהֵלָל מְאֹד, וְלִגְדָּלְתוֹ אֵין חֶקֶר.
דּוֹר לְדוֹר יִשְׁבַּח מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, וּגְבוּרָתֶיךָ יִגְדֹּד.
הִדְר כְּבוֹד הוֹדָךְ, וְדַבְרֵי נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ אֲשִׁיחָה.
וְעֲדוֹז נִוְרָאוֹתֶיךָ יֹאמְרוּ, וּגְדָלְתְּךָ אֲסַפְּרֶנָּה.
זָכַר רַב טוֹבְךָ יִבְיָעוּ, וְצַדִּיקְתְּךָ יִרְנֶנּוּ.
חֲנֹן וְרַחוּם יְהוָה, אֲרָךְ אֲפִים וּגְדָל־חֶסֶד.
טוֹב יְהוָה לְכָל, וְרַחֲמָיו עַל כָּל־מַעֲשָׂיו.
יִוְדוּךָ יְהוָה כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, וְחִסְדֶּיךָ יִבְרַכּוּכָה.

continued

ASHREI. According to Rabbi Eleazar (3rd century, Land of Israel) speaking in the name of his teacher, Abina, the daily recitation of Psalm 145 opens a pathway to eternity. The Babylonian Talmud explains that it is an alphabetical acrostic (although it is missing one letter, *nun*) that symbolically encompasses the variety of praises of God, and that it contains an especially appropriate description of the thankfulness with which we are to approach God: "You open Your hand, satisfying all the living with contentment" (Berakhot 4b).

An additional reason for its frequent use in the liturgy is that the psalm expresses a dual posture of faithfulness. "I" express my faithfulness to God, and the

psalm then describes that God faithfully cares for those devoted to God. The two themes are interwoven throughout the psalm, which then concludes with a final assertion that not only "I" but "all that is mortal" will praise God. It is this expression of a covenantal relationship, in which God and humanity respond to each other, that makes Ashrei both an appropriate introduction to prayer (as it is in Minhah), and an appropriate conclusion to prayer (as it is in the weekday Shacharit service). Here, it serves in both of those roles: concluding Shacharit and the Torah service, and simultaneously introducing Musaf. For synagogue use, two verses were added to the beginning of Psalm 145, both of which begin with the word *ashrei*, "joyous" (Psalms 84:5 and 144:15), and it was these additional verses that gave the name "Ashrei" to this prayer. The first verse, which speaks of those who "dwell in Your house," is especially appropriate in the context of synagogue prayer. Similarly, at the end, the verse "we shall praise Adonai now and always" was appended from Psalm 115:18.

After reading the Torah,
we recite the line "joyous
are they who dwell in Your
house," inviting us to ponder
what truly makes God—and
us—feel at home.

Dreaming of Home

We want so much to be in
that place
where we are respected
and cherished,
protected, acknowledged,
nurtured, encouraged,
heard.

And seen, seen
in all our loveliness,
in all our fragile strength.

And safe, safe in all our
trembling
vulnerability. Where we
are known
and safe, safe and known—
is it possible?

—MERLE FELD

ASHREI

Joyous are they who dwell in Your house;
they shall praise You forever.

*Joyous the people who are so favored;
joyous the people whose God is ADONAI.*

A SONG OF PRAISE, OF DAVID

I exalt You, my God, my sovereign; I praise Your name, always.

Every day I praise You, glorifying Your name, always.

Great is ADONAI, greatly to be praised,
though Your greatness is unfathomable.

*One generation praises Your works to the next,
telling of Your mighty deeds.*

I would speak of Your majestic glory
and of Your wondrous acts.

*Generations speak of Your awe-inspiring deeds;
I, too, shall recount Your greatness.*

They recount Your great goodness,
and sing of Your righteousness.

*ADONAI is merciful and compassionate,
patient, and abounding in love.*

ADONAI is good to all, and God's mercy embraces
all of creation.

*All of creation acknowledges You,
and the faithful bless You.*

continued

Ashrei yosh'vei veitekha, od y'hal'lukha selah.

Ashrei ha-am she-kakhah lo, ashrei ha-am she-Adonai elohav.
T'hilah l'david.

Aromim-kha elohai ha-melech, va-avar'kha shimkha l'olam va-ed.

B'khol yom avar'kheka, va-ahal'lah shimkha l'olam va-ed.

Gadol Adonai u-m'hulal me'od, v'ligdulato ein heiker.

Dor l'dor y'shabah ma-asekha, u-g'vurotekha yagidu.

Hadar k'vod hodekha, v'divrei niflotekha asihah.

Ve-ezuz norotekha yomeiru, u-g'dulat'kha asaprenah.

Zeikher rav tuv'kha yabiu, v'tzidkat'kha y'raneinu.

Hanun v'rahum Adonai, erekh apayim u-g'dol hased.

Tov Adonai lakol, v'rahmav al kol ma-asav.

Yodukha Adonai kol ma-asekha, va-hasidekha y'var'khukha.