

Interpretive Musaf Service
For the Second Day of Rosh Hashanah



Temple Beth-El
Ithaca, NY
5781

From *Anna and the King of Siam* (adapted):

“Ahead she saw a courtyard paved with rough-hewn slabs. Two stone mandarins of ferocious aspect, mounted on horses, guarded the entrance. Farther on, a pair of men-at-arms in bas-relief challenged them. Near these stood live sentries, dressed in European uniforms but barefoot. On the left was a pavilion, the whole back wall of which was covered with a mural. On the right was the palace with a large semi-circular façade. In the background was an extensive range of buildings.

Awed a little, they climbed the stairs to the palace. They moved softly after the interpreter, through spacious salons in ascending tiers, all carpeted. At the windows were luxurious draperies. Crystal candelabras hung from the ceilings. A superb vase of silver, embossed and burnished, stood on a table inlaid with mother-of-pearl and chased with silver. Flowers of great variety and beauty filled the rooms with a languorous and slightly oppressive fragrance. On every side were rare vases, jeweled cups and boxes, burnished chalices, statuettes, Oriental and European, antique and modern.

They came at last to the audience chamber where their guide stopped. She caught sight of a number of young girls peeping at them from behind the velvet curtains which hung from ceiling to floor. A large group of male attendants crouched in the antechamber. ... There was subdued bustle of excitement, the peering of many dark eyes, and the little party of aliens stood in the middle of it, uncertain, apprehensive, and wholly bewildered by the magnificence and strangeness of what they had seen.

Suddenly the curtain parted and a figure appeared. The murmuring ceased instantly. A wave of unreasoning fear permeated the atmosphere ...”

Our Sovereign on High (“Melekh Elyon”)

(traditional *piyyut*, adapted)

Our Sovereign who
dwells in the heights
Is wonderous in the heavens
Will display the power of the Divine forever and ever.

Our Sovereign who
Speaks with righteousness
Is clothed in justice
Listens to those who cry out.

Our Sovereign who
Is good and whose goodness is everlasting
Who fashioned the infinite heavens.

Our Sovereign, the eternal who
perceives that which is hidden,
And gives speech to the mute.

Our Sovereign who
Never sleeps
Is surrounded by tranquility and holds reward for the righteous.

Our Sovereign whose
Power is eternal
Who is glorious forever
Who is justly praised.

Our Sovereign will rule forever and ever.

Preparing for Rosh Hashanah – On Memory

By Sheri Lindner

The smell of Gorham's silver polish
releases memory
tucked ages ago into
crenulated brainfolds,
pathways to the soul
that pink butter
dabbed on a soft gray cloth
massaged into forks, knives, and spoons
my hands lathered with graying paste
as I rubbed away history,
the tarnish laid down
by time and touch
until they were as pristine
as creation's beginning.

It's funny that we did that,
Gram and I,
funny, because we Jews
like to remember,
hold on to time's imprints,
caresses from generations of fingers,
and we were wiping all that away,
all that I didn't yet know
I was not supposed to forget.

Memory holds that six year old
there, standing
on a chair at the sink,
head to head with Gram,
rubbing those stains away
to start the new year seeing
myself and my grandmother reflected
in the cradles of her silver soup spoons.

God's Remembering

By Rabbi Arthur Green

Jews are all about memory. We have been around longer than most identifiable human families, and our memory goes all the way back. Abraham. Moses. Ruth. David. Esther. They all still live in our calendar, hence in our imagination. They link to all our personal memories: friends, parents, grandparents; all of them come and surround us, especially in this sacred season.

But those are human memories. Here we are looking for much more: God's memory. The unchanging One, the great One of being. Does it remember? What we are really asking here is: "Am I remembered? Is my life memorable in any way? Is anybody paying attention? Am I being noticed?"

This is our answer. "Yes, You, Adonai, remember the whole enterprise. Each one of us, every creature in Your image, is seen and noticed, remaining eternally present within that One.

From Tales of Love and Darkness

by Amos Oz

After midnight, toward the end of the [General Assembly's] vote, I woke up. My bed was underneath the window that looked out on the street, so all I had to do was kneel and peer through the slates of the shutters. I shivered.

Like a frightening dream, crowds of shadows stood massed together silently by the yellow light of the street lamp, in our yard, in the neighboring yards, on balconies, in the roadway, like a vast assembly of ghosts. Hundreds of people not uttering a sound, neighbors, acquaintances, and strangers, some in their nightclothes and others in jacket and tie, occasional men in hats or caps, some women bareheaded, others in dressing gowns with scarves around their heads, some of them carrying sleepy children on their shoulders, and on the edge of the crowd I noticed here and there an elderly woman sitting on a stool or a very old man who had been brought out into the street with his chair.

The whole crowd seemed to have been turned to stone in that frightening night silence, as if they were not real people but hundreds of dark silhouettes painted onto the canvas of the flickering darkness. As though they had died on their feet. Not a word was heard, not a cough or footstep. No mosquito hummed. Only the deep, rough voice of the American presenter blaring from the radio, which was set at full volume and made the night air tremble, or it may have been the voice of the president of the Assembly, the Brazilian Oswaldo Aranha. One after another he read out the names of the last countries on the list, in English alphabetical order, followed immediately by the reply of their representative. United Kingdom: abstains. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: yes. United States: yes. Uruguay: yes. Venezuela: yes. Yemen: no. Yugoslavia: abstains.

At that the voice suddenly stopped, and an otherworldly silence descended and froze the scene, a terrified, panic-stricken silence, a silence of hundreds of people holding their breath, such as I have never heard in my life either before or after that night.

Then the thick, slightly hoarse voice came back, shaking the air as it summed up with a rough dryness brimming with excitement: Thirty-three for. Thirteen against. Ten abstentions and one country absent from the vote. The resolution is approved.

His voice was swallowed up in a roar that burst from the radio, overflowing from the galleries in the hall at Lake Success, and after a couple more seconds of shock and disbelief, of lips parted as though in thirst and eyes wide open, our faraway street on the edge of Kerem Avraham in northern Jerusalem also roared all at once in a first, terrifying shout that tore through the darkness and the buildings and trees, piercing itself, not a shout of joy, nothing like the shout of spectators in sports grounds or excited rioting crowds, perhaps more like a scream of horror and bewilderment, a cataclysmic shout, a shout that could shift rocks, that could freeze your blood, as though all the dead who had ever died here and all those still to die had received a brief window to shout ...

And So I Call

(A 5th century piyyut by Jose ben Jose, adapted by Rabbi Rachel Safman)

If I ran for help, would I not find God near at hand, when I called?

So, as I stand now in the midst of this congregation, I call.

Meet me, seek me. I am a sheep that has strayed.

I am shorn, mute unable to raise my voice and call.

Gaze upon me overwhelmed and impoverished, no one knows me.
To whom can I call?

Yet I trust I will be forsaken when I listen in the silence and call.

My heart will be overjoyed as I hear You, my beloved, knocking at my door with a call.

*I will see your banner lofting over the mountain, the sound of the shofar echoing
across the Earth, as I call.*

Even the silent will raise their voices joyfully and call.

All will utter words of song and praise as they raise up a sweet call.