

GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOR THE HIGH HOLY DAYS AND SERVICES

"Ch" always means the guttural "h" sound, as in "Chanuka."

Teshuvah תשובה -- literally, "return". We return to our true souls, to the right path, to God and to one another. *Teshuvah* is the word that is often translated as "repentance."

Cheshbon HaNefesh חשבון הנפש -- "self-accounting" or "reflecting on the soul". This is an important dimension of *teshuvah*. It is the Jewish term for introspection and taking careful stock of our actions and our relationships.

Yamim Nora'im ימי נוראים -- "Days of Awe/Reverence". *Yamin Noraim* can refer specifically to the ten days from Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur, or can include the preceding month when we prepare ourselves through *cheshbon nefesh* and prayer.

Elul אלול -- the name of the month in the Jewish calendar that precedes Rosh Hashanah. Elul is the period particularly devoted to *Teshuvah* and *Cheshbon HaNefesh*. One interpretation explains the name of the month as an acronym for the biblical phrase "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine" *Ani L'dodi V'dodi Li* אני לדודי ודודי לי. In other words, Elul is the time when our soul finds God or its true nature once again.

Tishrei תשרי -- pronounced "Tish-ray", this is the Hebrew name of the month that begins with Rosh Hashanah. It is both the culmination of the *Yamim Nora'im* and the month that continues with the festivals of Sukkot and Simchat Torah, celebrating bounty and the conclusion of the Torah reading cycle. We sometimes refer to "the Tishrei holy days" as a group.

S'lichah סליחה -- "forgiveness". Some of the prayers are referred to as *S'lichot*, prayers about forgiveness. In modern Hebrew, *s'lichah* means "excuse me, pardon me."

Machzor מִחזור -- the name of the special holy day prayerbook. The Hebrew literally means "cycle." The regular prayerbook is called the *Siddur* סידור, the "ordering" or "arranging" of the prayers.

Kippur כיפור -- the word usually translated as "atonement". *Kippur* refers to cleansing from the residue that our wrong actions leave on ourselves and on the community. "Atonement" is an English word, made up of the words "at one" -- coming together.

Chet חטא -- the word usually translated as "sin." In biblical Hebrew, *chet* has the connotation of an arrow that has missed its target and hit something else.

Vidui וידוי -- "confession". In general, Judaism values verbal confession of our wrongs, to one another and before God. Yom Kippur prayers include *Vidui* recitations that mention wrongs for every letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Amidah עֲמִידָה -- the standing prayer, which we say individually at our own pace. In our congregation, we wait for each individual to finish before we continue together. People say the words of the traditional Amidah in the prayerbook, their own prayers, or a combination.

Mi-sheberach מִשְׁבְּרַךְ -- "May the One Who Blessed", the first words of the prayer for healing that we say at one point during the Torah reading. We refer to the whole prayer by that name. When someone is sick, she might ask, "Will you say a *Mi-sheberach* for me?" Saying a name out loud or to yourself during the *Mi-sheberach* is a way of strengthening support for that person and declaring that his suffering and his life deserves attention, from others and from God. *Mi-sheberach* does not flow from belief that God sends physical healing to some and not others.

Kaddish Yatom קְדִישׁ יְתוּם -- the Mourners' Kaddish, a prayer recited by people in the first year of mourning a close relative or on the anniversary of the death. In our congregation, anyone who wishes may stand in support. Some people choose to say Kaddish for a close friend, or in honor of people for whom no relative may be observing the practice.

Torah תּוֹרָה -- specifically, the first five books of the Bible, which are written in the Torah scroll. Torah is also a general word for all the teachings of Judaism throughout time.

Talmud תַּלְמוּד -- the collection of discussions that made up the first phase of the "oral tradition", discussing both laws and ideas, through about the sixth century of the Common Era. When we talk about "The Rabbis", we mean specifically the rabbis mentioned in the Talmud.

Midrash מִדְרָשׁ -- an interpretation or story that suggests or illuminates possible meanings of the Torah that shed light on questions of our day. "The Midrash" also refers to the first books that have midrash in them, from the era of the Talmud.

Some traditional ways to greet people during this season:

Shana Tova שָׁנָה טוֹבָה -- A Good Year

Shana Tova U-me-tuka שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמְתוּקָה -- A Good and Sweet Year

There is a custom of eating apples and honey to signify this wish!

L'shana Tova Ti-ka-tay-voo לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה תִּכְתְּבוּ -- May You Be Written For a Good Year

This greeting draws from a legend depicting God writing down our destinies for the new year in a "Book of Life."

G'mar Chatimah Tova גְּמַר חֲתִימָה טוֹבָה -- A Good Final Sealing

This greeting, specifically for Yom Kippur, picks up on that legend, particularly the notion that our destiny is sealed in the book on Yom Kippur.

"An easy and meaningful fast"