

אֲשֶׁרֵי יוֹשְׁבֵי בֵיתְךָ, עוֹד יִהְלָלוּךָ סְלָה.  
אֲשֶׁרֵי הָעַם שִׁפְכָה לוֹ, אֲשֶׁרֵי הָעַם שִׁיהוּהוּ אֱלֹהֵיו.

וְנִהְלָה לְדוֹר.

אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ, וְאֶבְרַכְּךָ שִׁמְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.  
בְּכָל־יּוֹם אֶבְרַכְּךָ, וְאֶהְלֵלְךָ שִׁמְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.  
גְּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד, וְלִגְדֻלְתּוֹ אֵין חֶקֶר.  
דוֹר לְדוֹר יִשְׂבַח מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, וְגִבּוֹרְתֶיךָ יִגְיֵדוּ.  
הֵדָר כְּבוֹד הַדּוֹף, וְדִבְרֵי נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ אֲשִׁיחָה.  
וְעִזּוֹז נוֹרְאוֹתֶיךָ יֵאמְרוּ, וְגִדְלֹתֶיךָ אֲסַפְּרֶנָּה.  
זָכַר רַב־טוֹבְךָ יִבְיַעוּ, וְצִדְקֹתֶיךָ יִרְפְּנוּ.  
חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם יְהוָה, אֲרָךְ אַפָּיִם וְגִדְל־חַסֵּד.  
טוֹב־יְהוָה לְכָל, וְרַחֲמָיו עַל־כָּל־מַעֲשָׂיו.  
יִדְוֶךָ יְהוָה כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, וְחֲסִידֶיךָ יִבְרַכּוּכָהּ.

NE-ILAH נְעִילָה means "closing," and referred originally to the closing of the gates of the ancient Temple in Jerusalem. It then took on a more spiritual meaning, and was understood to refer to the symbolic closing of the gates of heaven.

On ordinary weekdays there are three services at which we recite the Amidah (Arvit, evening; Shaḥarit, morning, and Minhah, afternoon). On Shabbat and Festivals we add a fourth (Musaf, literally "addition"). In the Talmud, a fifth service, called Ne-ilah, was added on all fast days. Today, we recite a Ne-ilah service only on Yom Kippur.

Ne-ilah is one of the most moving of all services, bringing this sacred day to a close with poetic additions to the liturgy and unique melodies. It is a worthy parallel to Kol Nidrei, with which the Yom Kippur journey began. (*adapted from Reuven Hammer*)

JOYOUS ARE THEY אֲשֶׁרֵי. The afternoon service (Minhah) begins with this psalm every other day of the year, but on Yom Kippur, in the Ashkenazic rite, it is delayed until Ne-ilah.

Psalms 145, which is an alphabetic acrostic, forms the main body of the Ashrei prayer, but it is preceded by two verses beginning with the word *ashrei* (Psalms 84:5 and 144:15). The first verse notes that we are sitting in God's house, while the second acknowledges the community with whom we pray.

The use of the alphabet is not only a poetic device but also an aid to memory, making the psalm particularly well-suited to public recitation in an era when written texts were rare. It is also a psalm that is obviously designed to be recited by two groups, or perhaps by a leader with the congregation responding. The leader speaks the praise of God and calls upon others to bless God's name as well. The group then responds with statements in which God's qualities are enumerated.

(*adapted from Reuven Hammer*)

### Ne-ilah

The sun has begun to set and the holiest day of the year is about to come to a close; we are weak from fasting and tired from a long day of praying. On the one hand, we may be looking forward to resuming our normal lives, confident in our having cleansed ourselves and grateful for the chance to begin again. On the other hand, we are especially conscious of the passing of sacred time, of the spiritual work that remains undone, and of the extent to which we squander opportunities today and throughout the year. The service of Ne-ilah reflects these complicated emotions, containing both joyful expressions of confidence and urgent pleas for just a little more time before the gates close.

### Ashrei

The first half of the psalm, through the line beginning with the letter *mem*, praises God's greatness, goodness, and sovereignty in general, abstract terms. There is then a break in the acrostic, with no verse beginning with the letter *nun*. With the very next verse (beginning with the *samekh*) the tone of the psalm shifts markedly, and we recount the very specific, particular ways in which God takes care of God's creatures: supporting those who

*(continued)*

### 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.*

### PSALM 145

A PSALM 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 God's greatness is unfathomable.

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

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

*People 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.*

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

*Ashrei ha-am she-kakhah lo, ashrei ha-am she-Adonai elohav.*

*T'hillah l'david.*

*Aromim'kha elohai ha-melekh, 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'hullal m'od, v'li-g'dullato ein heiker.*

*Dor l'dor y'shabbah ma-asekha, u-g'vurotekha yaggidu.*

*Hadar k'vod hodekha, v'divrei nifl'otekha asihah.*

*Ve-ezuz nor'otekha yomeiru, u-g'dullat'kha asap'rennah.*

*Zeikher rav tuv'kha yabbi-u, v'tzidkat'kha y'ranneinu.*

*Hannun v'rahum Adonai, erekh appayim u-g'dol hased.*

*Tov Adonai la-kol, v'rahavam al kol ma-asav.*

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

אל נורא עלילה

אל נורא EL NORA ALILAH עלילה. Attributed to Moshe Ibn Ezra (c. 1055–1135, Spain), this *piyyut* introduces Ne-ilah in the Sephardic rite. Note that the name משה (*Moshe*) and the word חזק (*hazak*, "be strong") are spelled out in the first letters of each verse. The poem is a plea for forgiveness. This *piyyut* entered the Ashkenazic *maḥzor* in the 20th century, marking the opening of the ark for Ne-ilah. The last two stanzas are not part of the original poem but have been attached to it in many editions.

אל נורא עלילה  
המצא לנו מחילה

מתי מספר קרואים  
ומסלדים בחילה

שופכים לך נפשם  
המציאם מחילה

היה להם לסתרה  
ותתמם להוד ולגילה

הן אותם ורחם  
עשה בהם פלילה

זכר צדקת אביהם  
כקדם ותחלה

קרא נא שנת רצון  
לאהליבה ואהלה

תזכו לשנים רבות  
בדיצה ובצהלה

מיכאל שר ישראל  
בשורו נא הגאלה

L'OHOLIVAH V'OHOLAH  
לאהליבה ואהלה. Translated here as "former glory." The prophet Ezekiel uses these names to refer to Samaria and Jerusalem, the capitals of the two ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah (Ezekiel 23:4). As the day ends, we pray for the unity of all Israel.

אל נורא עלילה  
בשעת הנעילה.

לך עין נושאים  
בשעת הנעילה.

מחה פשעם וכחשם  
בשעת הנעילה.

וחלצם ממארה  
בשעת הנעילה.

וכל-לוחץ ולוחם  
בשעת הנעילה.

וחדש את ימיהם  
בשעת הנעילה.

והשב שארית הצאן  
בשעת הנעילה.

הבנים והבנות  
בשעת הנעילה.

אליהו וגבריאל  
בשעת הנעילה.

INTRODUCTION TO NE-ILAH: A PIYYUT

Awe-inspiring Creator, God,  
find forgiveness for us  
We who are called "few in number"  
and tremblingly beseech You,  
As we pour out our souls,  
craft forgiveness for us,  
Be our protector.  
seal our fate for joy and glory  
Be compassionate and loving toward us;  
who would oppress or war against us,  
Remember our ancestors' righteousness  
as of old and as at the beginning,  
May this year be one which is pleasing to You.  
to their former glory  
May we, Your children,  
length of days merited  
May Michael protector of Israel  
bring tidings of redemption

awe-inspiring Creator, God,  
in this closing hour.  
raise our eyes toward You,  
in this closing hour.  
wipe away our sins and denials,  
in this closing hour.  
Shield us from terror;  
in this closing hour.  
bring judgment on all  
in this closing hour.  
and renew our days,  
in this closing hour.  
Restore Your remaining flock  
in this closing hour.  
celebrate with joy and gladness,  
in this closing hour.  
along with Elijah and Gabriel  
in this closing hour.

*El nora alilah  
hamtzei lanu m'hilah*

*M'tei mispar k'ru'im  
u-m'sal'dim b'hilah*

*Shof'khim l'kha nafsham  
hamtzi-eim m'hilah*

*Heyeih lahem l'sitrah  
v'hotmeim l'hod u-l'gilah*

*Hon otam v'raheim  
aseih vahem p'lilah*

*Z'khor tzidkat avihem  
k'kedem u-t'hillah*

*K'ra na sh'nat ratzon  
l'oholivah v'oholah*

*Tizku l'shanim rabbot  
b'ditzah u-v'tzoholah*

*Mikha-el sar yisra-el  
basru na ha-g'ulah*

*El nora alilah  
bi-sh'at ha-n'ilah.*

*l'kha ayin nos'im  
bi-sh'at ha-n'ilah.*

*m'heih fisham v'kha'hasham  
bi-sh'at ha-n'ilah.*

*v'hal'tzeim mi-m'eirah  
bi-sh'at ha-n'ilah.*

*v'khol loheitz v'loheim  
bi-sh'at ha-n'ilah.*

*v'haddeish et y'meihem  
bi-sh'at ha-n'ilah.*

*v'hasheiv sh'eirit ha-tzon  
bi-sh'at ha-n'ilah.*

*ha-banim v'ha-banot  
bi-sh'at ha-n'ilah.*

*eliyahu v'gavri-el  
bi-sh'at ha-n'ilah.*

## תפילת העמידה – חזרת הש"ץ

*We rise as the ark is opened. The ark remains open throughout the leader's repetition of the Amidah, during which it is customary for those who are able to stand. In some congregations, while the ark remains open, congregants can approach the ark for a final silent prayer.*

פִּי שֵׁם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא, הִבּו גְדֹל לֵאלֹהֵינוּ.  
אֲדַנִּי שְׁפַתֵי תִפְתַּח, וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ.

*Version with Patriarchs and Matriarchs:*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ  
[וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ], אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם,  
אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב,  
אֱלֹהֵי שְׂרָה, אֱלֹהֵי רִבְקָה,  
אֱלֹהֵי רַחֵל, וְאֱלֹהֵי לֵאָה,  
הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגְּבוּר וְהַנּוֹרָא,  
אֵל עֲלִיוֹן, גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים  
טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל, הַזּוֹכֵר  
חֲסָדֵי אֲבוֹת [וְאִמּוֹת],  
וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם  
לְמַעַן שְׁמוּ בְּאֵהָבָה.

*Version with Patriarchs:*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,  
אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי  
יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, הָאֵל  
הַגָּדוֹל הַגְּבוּר וְהַנּוֹרָא,  
אֵל עֲלִיוֹן, גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים  
טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל, הַזּוֹכֵר  
חֲסָדֵי אֲבוֹת, וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל  
לְבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׁמוּ  
בְּאֵהָבָה.

**GOD OF ABRAHAM, GOD OF ISAAC, AND GOD OF JACOB**  
אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב. God begins the conversation with Moses at the burning bush with this self-description. We understand the world of prayer, first of all, through the experience of those who came before us—both in our immediate and our ancient past. Perhaps the quotation of these words expresses the hope that we too might feel the presence of God. Moses saw only a burning bush, but his inner ear heard so much more.

**INSPIRED BY THE INSIGHT**  
מִסוּד חֲכָמִים. A personal plea of the prayer leader that the prayers about to be offered will be acceptable.

**SEAL US** וְחַתְּמֵנוּ. Since Rosh Hashanah, we have included this and three other insertions in every Amidah every day. Until Ne-ilah, we have asked God to inscribe us in the Book of Life (וְחַתְּבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים); now, we ask God to seal us (וְחַתְּמֵנוּ) in it.

מִסוּד חֲכָמִים וְנְבוֹנִים,  
וּמְלַמֵּד דַּעַת מְבִינִים,  
אֶפְתָּחָה פִּי בְּתַפְלָה וּבְתַחֲנוּנִים,  
לְחֵלוֹת וּלְחַגֵּן פְּנֵי מַלְךְ מְלֵא רַחֲמִים  
מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ לְעוֹנִים.

זְכְּרֵנוּ לְחַיִּים, מַלְךְ חַפֵּץ בְּחַיִּים, וְחַתְּמֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים,  
לְמַעַן אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים.

## REPETITION OF THE AMIDAH

*We rise as the ark is opened. The ark remains open throughout the leader's repetition of the Amidah, during which it is customary for those who are able to stand. In some congregations, while the ark remains open, congregants can approach the ark for a final silent prayer.*

### *Meditation*

There is little we may claim to know about God, but this much is certain: one cannot come before God save in integrity of heart and mind. It would not do to try to feign or fib for the greater glory of God. It cannot be required of human beings, and surely it can never be made a duty, to plead falsely to the God of truth. . . . The fearless seeker of truth, even the honest blasphemer, is nearer to God than the liars for the benefit of religion.

—SHALOM SPIEGEL

As I proclaim God's name, ADONAI, exalt our God.  
ADONAI, open my lips that my mouth may speak Your praise.

### *First B'rakhah: Our Ancestors*

*Version with Patriarchs:*

*Barukh atah ADONAI,*  
our God and God of our  
ancestors,  
God of Abraham, God of  
Isaac, and God of Jacob,  
great, mighty, awe-inspiring,  
transcendent God,  
who acts with lovingkindness,  
and creates all things,  
who remembers the loving  
deeds of our ancestors,  
and who will send a redeemer  
to their children's children  
with love  
for the sake of divine honor.

*Version with Patriarchs and Matriarchs:*

*Barukh atah ADONAI,*  
our God and God of our  
ancestors,  
God of Abraham, God of  
Isaac, and God of Jacob,  
God of Sarah, God of  
Rebecca, God of Rachel,  
and God of Leah,  
great, mighty, awe-inspiring,  
transcendent God,  
who acts with lovingkindness,  
and creates all things,  
who remembers the loving  
deeds of our ancestors,  
and who will send a redeemer  
to their children's children  
with love  
for the sake of divine honor.

Inspired by the insight of sages  
and the teachings of those who acquired wisdom,  
I open my lips in prayer and supplication  
to entreat the Merciful Sovereign,  
who forgives and pardons sin.

Remember us for life, Sovereign who delights in life,  
and seal us in the Book of Life, for Your sake, God of life.

*Zokhreinu l'hayyim, melekh hafeitz ba-hayyim,  
v'hotmeinu b'seifer ha-hayyim, l'ma-ankha Elohim hayyim.*

The following three paragraphs are recited aloud, first by the leader and then by the congregation.

פָּתַח לָנוּ שַׁעַר,  
בְּעֵת נַעֲלִית שַׁעַר,  
כִּי פָנָה יוֹם.  
הַיּוֹם יִפְנֶה,  
הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יָבֹא וַיִּפְנֶה,  
נְבוֹאָה שְׁעָרֶיךָ.  
אָנָּה אֵל נָא,  
שָׂא נָא, סָלַח נָא, מַחֵל נָא,  
חֲמַל-נָא, רַחֵם-נָא, כִּפְרֵ-נָא,  
כְּבוֹשׁ חֲטָא וְעוֹן.  
אֵל, אֲרוֹךְ אַפַּיִם אַתָּה,  
וּבַעַל הַרְחָמִים נִקְרָאתָ,  
וְדַרְךְ תִּשׁוּבָה הוֹרִיתָ.  
גְּדַלְת רַחֲמֶיךָ וְחֲסָדֶיךָ תִּזְכֹּר הַיּוֹם  
וּבְכָל-יּוֹם לְזָרַע יִדְיָדֶיךָ.  
תִּפְּן אֵלֵינוּ בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ,  
כִּי אַתָּה הוּא בַּעַל הַרְחָמִים.  
בְּתַחֲנוּן וּבִתְפִלָּה פָּנִיךָ נִקְדָּם,  
כְּהוֹדַעְתָּ לְעַנּוּ מִקִּדְּם.  
מִחֲרוֹן אַפְּךָ שׁוּב,  
כְּמוֹ בְּתוֹרָתְךָ כְּתוּב,  
וּבִצֵּל כְּנַפְיֶךָ נַחֲסָה וְנִתְלוֹנָן,  
כִּיּוֹם וַיִּרַד יְהוָה בְּעַנּוֹ.  
◀ תַּעֲבֹר עַל פֶּשַׁע וְתִמְחָה אֶשָׁם,  
כִּיּוֹם וַיִּתִּיצַב עִמּוֹ שָׁם.  
תִּתְאַזֵּן שׁוֹעֲתֵנוּ וְתִקְשִׁיב מִנוּ מֵאֲמֹר  
כִּיּוֹם וַיִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה.

As in the Kol Nidrei service, we turn now to the two most important themes of Yom Kippur: *s'liḥah* (forgiveness) and *viddui* (confession). God is merciful and forgiving, and so confession brings forgiveness and atonement. Just as in the Kol Nidrei service, the Thirteen Attributes of God—which emphasize God's forgiving nature—are repeated three times. Each time, they are introduced with *piyyutim*.

Each of the lines here is actually the refrain from a separate *piyyut*, traditionally attributed to Elazar Kallir (6th century, Land of Israel). The staccato quality of these *piyyutim* emphasizes the urgency of the moment.

Following the very moment when Israel was closest to God—standing at Sinai, having heard God utter the Ten Commandments—the Torah sees the people as sinking from the greatest heights to terrible depths. It was then that Israel committed the greatest breach against God, making a golden calf and worshipping it. But Moses prayed and God forgave even this terrible sin. It is this quintessential moment of sin and forgiveness that is the model for Yom Kippur. God does not want to punish us for our sins, but rather wants us to return to the path that

leads toward the Holy One. If the sin of the golden calf could be forgiven, so can any sin.

**AS ON THE DAY** כִּיּוֹם. The phrases that follow are from Exodus 34:5, the scene of Moses on Mount Sinai following the shattering of the tablets. When Moses was on the mountain, he did not eat or drink. Just as Israel at Sinai was forgiven, so too may our sins be forgiven; just as Moses, after fasting and praying, was afforded God's comforting and loving presence, so too may we merit God's loving presence.

## S'LIHOT

My room  
has many doors  
Each leads to  
another room  
with many doors  
Without a word I go  
from door to door  
from room to room  
I hear my silence  
hear strange voices  
an echo of words  
behind a door  
that is shut  
Where is the key  
the key word

—ROSE AUSLANDER

*The following three paragraphs are recited aloud,  
first by the leader and then repeated by the congregation.*

### THE GATES ARE CLOSING: THREE POETIC FRAGMENTS

Keep open the gate for us,  
at the time of the closing of the gate,  
for the day is coming to an end.

The day will come to an end,  
soon, the sun will set,  
let us come into Your gates.

God, we pray:  
turn to us, forgive us, pardon us,  
have mercy upon us, have compassion on us,  
grant us atonement,  
conquer sin and transgression.

*P'tah lanu sha-ar,  
b'ait n'ilat sha-ar,  
ki fanah yom.*

*Ha-yom yifneh,  
ha-shemesh yavo v'yifneh,  
navo-ah sh'arekha.*

*Ana El na,  
sa na, s'lah na, m'hal na,  
hamol na, rahem na, kapper na,  
k'vosh heit v'avon.*

God, You are patient. You are known as the source of mercy. You have taught the way of repentance. Today, and every day, call to mind the wonder of Your compassion and mercy toward the children of those You loved. Turn toward us in mercy, for You are the source of mercy.

We approach Your presence with supplication and prayer, and with the words You revealed to Moses, the humble one, long ago. Turn away from wrath, as it is written in Your Torah, and let us nestle under Your wings,

*as on the day* "God descended in a cloud."

Overlook sin, blot out guilt,

*as on the day* "God stood beside him."

Hear our cry, attend to our plea,

*as on the day* "he called on the name ADONAI."

ויעבר יהוה על פניו ויקרא:  
יהוה יהוה, אל רחום וחנון, ארך אפים, ורב־חסד  
ואמת. נצר חסד לאלפים, נשא עון ופשע וחטאה,  
ונקה.  
וסלחת לעוננו ולחטאתנו ונחלתנו.

*Some customarily strike their heart when asking God to forgive and pardon:*

סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו, מחל לנו מלכנו כי פשענו,  
כי־אתה, אדני, טוב וסלח ורב־חסד לכל־קוראיך.

כרחם אב על בנים, כן תרחם יהוה עלינו. ליהוה  
הישועה על עמך ברכתך סלה. יהוה צבאות עמנו,  
משגב לנו אלהי יעקב, סלה. יהוה צבאות, אשרי אדם  
בטח בך. יהוה הושיעה, המלך יעננו ביום קראנו.

◀ סלח נא לעון העם הזה כגדל חסדך, וכאשר נשאתה  
לעם הזה ממצרים ועד הנה. ושם נאמר:  
ויאמר יהוה סלחתי כדברך.

THIRTEEN ATTRIBUTES.  
After praying for Israel,  
Moses asked to see God's  
face. God replied that no  
one can see God directly,  
but human beings can  
experience God indirectly.  
God passed before Moses,  
who then heard the words  
of the Thirteen Attributes  
(Exodus 34:6-7), which  
speak of God's love. The  
message of the liturgy is  
that God is experienced  
in moments of forgiveness  
and love. Repeatedly, the  
liturgy emphasizes God's  
graciousness, mercy, and  
love.

FORGIVE סלח Numbers  
14:19-20. When the people  
Israel proved faithless after  
hearing the report of the  
spies who had returned  
from scouting the land,  
Moses uttered this prayer.  
God responded, "I forgive,  
as you asked."

THE THIRTEEN ATTRIBUTES

And ADONAI passed before him and called:

ADONAI, ADONAI, God, merciful and compassionate, patient, abounding in love and faithfulness, assuring love for thousands of generations, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and granting pardon.

*Adonai, Adonai, El rahum v'hannun, erekh appayim v'rav hesed ve-emet. Notzeir hesed la-alafim, nosei avon va-fesha v'hatta-ah v'nakkeih.*

Forgive our transgressions and our sins; claim us for Your own.

*Some customarily strike their heart when asking God to forgive and pardon:*

Forgive us, our creator, for we have sinned;  
pardon us, our sovereign, for we have transgressed—  
for You, ADONAI, are kind and forgiving;  
You act generously to all who call on You.

*S'lah lanu avinu ki hatanu, m'hal lanu malkeinu ki fashanu,  
ki atah, Adonai, tov v'sallah v'rav hesed l'khol kor'ekha.*

As a parent looks kindly on a child, may You, God, look kindly on us. Salvation is ADONAI's alone; pour blessings on Your people forever. *Adonai Tz'va-ot* is with us, our support, the God of Jacob, forever. Blessed is the one who trusts in You, *Adonai Tz'va-ot*. ADONAI, save us. Surely the Sovereign will respond to us on the day that we call out.

“As befits Your abundant love, please forgive this people's sin, just as You have always forgiven this people from the time of the Exodus from Egypt until now.” When Moses recited this prayer it is recorded:

ADONAI said, “I forgive, as you asked.”

*Va-yomer Adonai salahti ki-d'varekha.*

*It is customary to strike one's heart with one's fist as each phrase is recited.*

אֲשַׁמְנוּ, בְּגִדְנוּ, גִּזְלָנוּ, דְּבָרְנוּ דָּפִי.  
הֶעָיִנוּ, וְהִרְשַׁעְנוּ, זָדָנוּ, חֲמָסְנוּ, טְפָלְנוּ שְׁקָר.  
יַעֲצָנוּ רָע, פְּזָבְנוּ, לָצָנוּ, מֵרָדְנוּ, נֹאֲצָנוּ.  
סָרְרָנוּ, עֵינָנוּ, פָּשַׁעְנוּ, צָרְרָנוּ, קִשְׁיָנוּ עָרְף.  
רְשַׁעְנוּ, שָׁחַתְנוּ, תַּעֲבָנוּ, תַּעֲיִנוּ, תַּעֲתַעְנוּ.

סָרְנוּ מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ וּמִמִּשְׁפָּטֶיךָ הַטּוֹבִים, וְלֹא שָׁוָה לָנוּ.  
וְאַתָּה צָדִיק עַל כָּל־הַבָּא עֲלֵינוּ, כִּי אָמַת עָשִׂיתָ וְאַנְחָנוּ  
הִרְשַׁעְנוּ. מֵה נֹאמֵר לְפָנֶיךָ יוֹשֵׁב מְרוֹם, וּמֵה נִסְפָּר  
לְפָנֶיךָ שׁוֹכֵן שְׁחָקִים, הֲלֹא כָּל הַנְּסֻתוֹת וְהַנְּגָלוֹת אַתָּה  
יֹדֵעַ.

אַתָּה נוֹתֵן יָד לְפֹשְׁעִים, וַיִּמְיָן פְּשׁוּטָה לְקַבֵּל שָׂבִים.  
וְתִלְמָדְנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהַתְּנוּדוֹת לְפָנֶיךָ עַל כָּל־  
עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ, לְמַעַן נִחָדֵל מֵעֲשָׂק יַדְיָנוּ, וְתִקְבְּלָנוּ בְּתַשׁוּבָה  
שְׁלֵמָה לְפָנֶיךָ כְּאֲשֵׁים וּכְנִיחוֹחִים, לְמַעַן דְּבָרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר  
אָמַרְתָּ. אֵין קֶץ לְאֲשֵׁי חֻבוֹתֵינוּ, וְאֵין מִסְפָּר לְנִיחוֹחֵי  
אֲשַׁמוֹתֵנוּ. וְאַתָּה יֹדֵעַ שְׂאֲחֵרִיתָנוּ רַמָּה וְתוֹלַעָה, לְפִיכָךְ  
הִרְבִּיתָ סְלִיחָתְנוּ.

מֵה אָנוּ, מֵה חַיֵּינוּ, מֵה חֲסָדְנוּ, מֵה צְדָקְנוּ,  
מֵה יִשְׁעֵנוּ, מֵה כַּחַנוּ, מֵה גְבוּרָתְנוּ.  
מֵה נֹאמֵר לְפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאַמּוֹתֵינוּ].  
הֲלֹא כָּל־הַגְּבוּרִים כָּאֵין לְפָנֶיךָ,  
וְאֲנָשֵׁי הַשָּׁם כְּלֹא הֵיוּ,  
וְחַכְמַיִם כְּבִלֵי מַדְעַ,  
וְנְבוֹנִים כְּבִלֵי הַשְּׂכָל,  
כִּי רַב מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם תָּהוּ,  
וַיִּמֵי חַיֵּיהֶם הֶבֶל לְפָנֶיךָ.  
וּמוֹתֵר הָאָדָם מִן הַבְּהֵמָה אֵין,  
כִּי הֶבֶל הֶבֶל.

**WE ABUSE** אֲשַׁמְנוּ. In Ne'ilah, we recite only this short confessional, the Ashamnu. It functions as a summary of the day, reminding us of the thoughts that have passed through our minds in these last twenty-four hours.

**YOU EXTEND YOUR HAND** יָד. אַתָּה נוֹתֵן יָד. These paragraphs replace the long confessional על חטא (Al Het), which is recited in all other services on Yom Kippur.

**WHAT ARE WE** אָנוּ. This paragraph is included in the daily morning service. This prayer expounds on the unimportance of our deeds and the meager nature of our goodness in comparison with God, concluding with the pessimistic words from Ecclesiastes 3:19: "Humans have no superiority over beasts; all life is vanity."

(Reuven Hammer)

**ALL IS VANITY** כִּי הֶבֶל הֶבֶל Ecclesiastes 3:19. Hevel (הֶבֶל) can also be translated as "breath" or "wind"; that is, our deeds are carried away like a passing wind.

### *Spiritual Security*

To attain a degree of spiritual security one cannot rely upon one's own resources. One needs an atmosphere, where the concern for the spirit is shared by a community. We are in need of students and scholars, masters and specialists. But we need also the company of witnesses, of human beings who are engaged in worship, who for a moment sense the truth that life is meaningless without attachment to God.

—ABRAHAM JOSHUA  
HESCHEL

### *Concluding Confession—Ashamnu*

*It is customary to strike one's heart with each word of the confession.*

We abuse, we betray, we are cruel, we destroy, we embitter, we falsify, we gossip, we hate, we insult, we jeer, we kill, we lie, we mock, we neglect, we oppress, we pervert, we quarrel, we rebel, we steal, we transgress, we are unkind, we are violent, we are wicked, we are extremists, we yearn to do evil, we are zealous for bad causes.

*Ashamnu, bagadnu, gazalnu, dibbarnu dofi,  
he-evinu, v'hirshanu, zadnu, hamasnu, tafalnu sheker,  
ya-atznu ra, kizzavnu, latznu, maradnu, ni-atznu,  
sararnu, avinu, pashanu, tzararnu, kishinu oref,  
rashanu, shihatnu, ti-avnu, ta-inu, titanu.*

We have turned from Your goodly laws and commandments, but it has not profited us. Surely, You are in the right with respect to all that comes upon us, for You have acted faithfully, but we have been in the wrong.

You extend Your hand to those who sin; Your right hand to receive those who turn. You have taught us, ADONAI our God, to confess each of our transgressions to You, so that we cease using our hands for oppression. Accept us fully when we turn to You, as You promised to accept the sweet smelling sacrifices. Endless are the guilt-offerings that would have been required of us in ancient Temple times.

You know that death is our end. Accordingly, You have afforded us abundant opportunities to seek forgiveness.

What are we? What is our life? Our goodness? Our righteousness? Our achievement? Our power? Our victories?

What shall we say in Your presence,  
ADONAI our God and God of our ancestors?  
Heroes count as nothing in Your presence,  
famous people are as if they never existed,  
the wise seem ignorant,  
and clever ones as if they lack reason.

The sum of their acts is chaos;  
in Your presence the days of their lives are futile.  
Human beings have no superiority over beasts;  
all life is vanity.

*Avinu Malkeinu is recited at N'ilah, including on Shabbat.  
An alternate version appears on the next page.*

אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! חָטְאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֶלָּא אַתָּה.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! חֲדֵשׁ עֲלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! בִּטֵּל מַעֲלֵינוּ כָּל־גְּזֵרוֹת קָשׁוֹת.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! בִּטֵּל מַחֲשָׁבוֹת שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! הִפֵּר עֲצַת אוֹיְבֵינוּ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! כֹּלָּה כָּל־צָר וּמַשְׁטִין מַעֲלֵינוּ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! כֹּלָּה דְבַר וְחָרֵב וְרָעַב וּשְׂבִי וּמִשְׁחִית וְעוֹן  
וּשְׂמֵד מִבְּנֵי בְרִיתֶךָ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! סִלַּח וּמַחַל לְכָל־עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! מַחֵה וְהַעֲבֵר פְּשָׁעֵינוּ וְחַטָּאתֵינוּ מִנֶּגֶד עֵינֶיךָ.

*We repeat the following lines after the leader:*

אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! הַחֲזִירְנוּ בְּתִשְׁבָּה שְׁלָמָה לְפָנֶיךָ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! שְׁלַח רְפוּאָה שְׁלָמָה לְחוּלֵי עַמֶּךָ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! זְכַרְנוּ בְּזִכְרוֹן טוֹב לְפָנֶיךָ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! חַתְּמֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר חַיִּים טוֹבִים.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! חַתְּמֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר גְּאֻלָּה וּישׁוּעָה.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! חַתְּמֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר פְּרִנְסָה וְכִלְכָּלָה.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! חַתְּמֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר זְכוּת.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! חַתְּמֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר סְלִיחָה וּמַחֲלָה.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! הַצְּמַח לָנוּ יִשׁוּעָה בְּקִרְוֵב.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! הֲרֵם קֶרֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! הֲרֵם קֶרֶן מְשִׁיחֶךָ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! שְׁמַע קוֹלְנוּ, חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! קַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן אֶת־תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! נָא אֵל תִּשְׁיָבֵנוּ רִיקִם מִלְּפָנֶיךָ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! זְכוּר כִּי עִפָּר אֲנַחְנוּ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! חֲמוּל עָלֵינוּ וְעַל עוֹלָלֵינוּ וְטַפָּנוּ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן הַרוּגִים עַל שֵׁם קָדְשֶׁךָ.  
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ! עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן טְבוּחִים עַל יְחוּדֶךָ.

אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ AVINU MALKEINU. The Babylonian Talmud reports: "It once happened that Rabbi Eliezer led the congregation and recited twenty-four *b'rakhot*, but his prayers were not answered. Then Rabbi Akiva followed him and led the congregation in prayer, saying, 'Our father, our sovereign, You are truly our father. Our father, our sovereign, we have no ruler but You. Our father, our sovereign, we have sinned before You. Our father, our sovereign, have mercy on us. Our father, our sovereign, do it for Your name's sake,' and his prayers were answered" (Taanit 25b). Generations have added many more verses to this prayer. The verses mentioning the martyrs were added after the Crusades.

Avinu Malkeinu was first introduced as a prayer for material blessing. It then took on an added layer of pleas against devastation by human enemies, and finally, special prayers for the High Holy Days (for instance, "inscribe us in the Book of Life").

The image of God as "father" represents relatedness and closeness; that of God as Ruler conveys authority and greater distance. Jewish theology has always talked of transcendence and immanence, God as ineffable and God as close at hand. The appeal here brings together both aspects of God.

## *Avinu Malkeinu*

*Avinu Malkeinu is recited at N'ilah, including on Shabbat. An alternate version appears on the next page.*

Avinu Malkeinu, we have sinned in Your presence.

*Avinu Malkeinu, we have no sovereign but You.*

Avinu Malkeinu, act toward us kindly in accord with Your name.

*Avinu Malkeinu, make this a good new year for us.*

Avinu Malkeinu, annul every harsh decree against us.

*Avinu Malkeinu, nullify the designs of our foes.*

Avinu Malkeinu, frustrate the plots of our enemies.

*Avinu Malkeinu, rid us of every oppressor and adversary.*

Avinu Malkeinu, rid Your covenanted people of disease, war, hunger, captivity, and destruction.

*Avinu Malkeinu, forgive and pardon all our sins.*

Avinu Malkeinu, do not look toward our sins and transgressions; blot them out.

*Avinu Malkeinu, return us to Your presence, fully penitent.*

Avinu Malkeinu, send complete healing to the sick among Your people.

*Avinu Malkeinu, remember us favorably.*

Avinu Malkeinu, seal us with goodness in the Book of Life.

*Avinu Malkeinu, seal us in the Book of Redemption.*

Avinu Malkeinu, seal us in the Book of Sustenance.

*Avinu Malkeinu, seal us in the Book of Merit.*

Avinu Malkeinu, seal us in the book of forgiveness.

*Avinu malkeinu, hahazireinu bi-t'shuvah sh'leimah l'fanekha.*

*Avinu malkeinu, sh'lah r'fu-ah sh'leimah l'holei ammekha.*

*Avinu malkeinu, zokhreinu b'zikkaron tov l'fanekha.*

*Avinu malkeinu, hotmeinu b'seifer hayyim tovim.*

*Avinu malkeinu, hotmeinu b'seifer g'ullah vi-shu-ah.*

*Avinu malkeinu, hotmeinu b'seifer parnasah v'khalkalah.*

*Avinu malkeinu, hotmeinu b'seifer z'khuyyot.*

*Avinu malkeinu, hotmeinu b'seifer s'lihah u-m'hilah.*

Avinu Malkeinu, cause our salvation to flourish soon.

*Avinu Malkeinu, cause Your people Israel to be exalted.*

Avinu Malkeinu, raise up Your anointed with strength.

*Avinu Malkeinu, hear our voice, be kind, sympathize with us.*

Avinu Malkeinu, accept our prayer, willingly and lovingly.

*Avinu Malkeinu, do not turn us away empty-handed.*

Avinu Malkeinu, remember that we are but dust.

*Avinu Malkeinu, have compassion for us, our infants, and our children.*

Avinu Malkeinu, do this for the sake of those who were martyred for Your holy name.

*Avinu Malkeinu, do this for the sake of those who were slaughtered for their exclusive devotion to You.*