

# A High Holiday Prayerbook

מִחְזֹר לַיָּמִים נוֹרָאִים

*Neilah Service*

***Bet Yitzchak -***  
*the Laugh Factory congregation*



# NEILAH SERVICE

## נְעִילָה לְיוֹם כְּפוּר



Traditionally, this Closing Service begins when the sun is over the treetops. These prayers are intended to be brief. Neither the rabbi nor the cantor prolongs the service. Traditionally, the service concludes before stars appear because this prayer recalls the closing of the Temple gates in Jerusalem. These gates would be closed on Yom Kippur before sunset, just after the kindling of the twilight lamps.

Open for us the gates even as they are closing.

*The sun is low; the hour is late;  
Let us enter the gate at last.*

### 1<sup>st</sup> Reader Card:

When a man or woman begins life, countless gates stand waiting to be opened. But as one walks through the years, gates close behind us, one by one.

*Remember the unopened gates.  
Open them before they lock.*

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Reader Card:

The gates do not stay open forever. We walk through the years, and they shut behind us. And at the end they are all closed, except the one final gate, which we must enter.

*Today shall I come  
if only all of you  
would listen.*

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Reader Card:

Before life opportunity passes, let us open the gates to blessing and beauty; go through the gates of kindness and compassion. Let us open the gates to those things in life that last eternally.

*The sun is low; the hour is late.  
Let us enter the gates at last.*

Neilah 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. -  
*adapted from Reuven Hammer*

Open for us these gates to life,  
even as the gates are ready to close  
and the day begins to wane.

פְּתַח לָנוּ שַׁעַר.  
בְּעֵת נְעִילַת שַׁעַר.  
כִּי פָנָה יוֹם:  
הַיּוֹם יִפְנֶה.  
הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יָבֵא וַיִּפְנֶה.  
נְבוֹאָה שְׁעָרֶיךָ:

The day is passing;  
The sun is setting; Let us enter Your gate at last.

אָנָּה אֵל נָא. שָׂא נָא. סְלַח־נָא. מַחֲל־נָא.  
חֲמַל־נָא. רַחֵם־נָא. כַּפֹּר־נָא. כְּבוֹשׁ חַטָּא וְעוֹן:

O God, we ask You, Forgive us, pardon us, remember us;  
Help us move away from broken paths.

O Master of Understanding, on Kol Nidre night we acknowledged our shortcomings, our missteps and false-steps, our head shaking and eye-rolling mistakes and misdeeds. We came with sadness and remorse for things we did and that now we recognize fell short. Throughout this day we have sought to reassert virtue where it was lacking and and rediscover meaning wherever we find ourselves.

4<sup>th</sup> Reader Card:

Now as we conclude this day of reflection, still mindful of our misdeeds, our tradition speaks to us with a reassuring message that all of us are simply works in progress, in need of looking deeply within from time to time.

5<sup>th</sup> Reader Card:

O Lord, You know who we are, for better or for worse—how we can be prone to miss the mark, succumb to temptation, and even betray the best that others have taught us or even that is within us.

6<sup>th</sup> Reader Card:

But You have offered us the opportunity to review our deeds and when required, repent sincerely to those we have wronged and to You. Indeed, we can set forth on new and better paths, appropriate divergences from mistaken, shrouded roads we have traveled.

7<sup>th</sup> Reader Card:

Help us to remember and exploit the best within ourselves. Help us to live honorably, avoiding the mistakes for which we have asked Your pardon.

8<sup>th</sup> Reader Card:

We pray that our thought and words, our good intentions and good values find favor before You; and may our hopes and deeds be worthy of Your blessing.

9<sup>th</sup> Reader Card:

The Lord said,  
"Say 'We' ";  
but I shook my head,  
Hid my hands tightly behind my back and said,  
Stubbornly,  
"I."

10<sup>th</sup> Reader Card:

The Lord said,  
"Say 'We' ";  
But I looked upon them, grimy and all awry.  
Myself in all those twisted shapes? Ah, no!  
Distastefully I turned my head away,  
Persisting,  
"They."

11<sup>th</sup> Reader Card:

The Lord said,  
"Say 'We' ";  
And I  
At last  
Richer by a hoard  
Of years  
And tears,  
Looked into their eyes and found the heavy word  
That bent my neck and bowed my head:  
Like a shamed schoolboy then I mumbled low,  
"We....., Lord."

The journey through Yom Kippur is a real journey—one to be measured not by what we feel when it is over but by how we lead our lives in the days and weeks and years afterwards, when the final *shofar* blast has pierced not only the highest reaches but also the deepest reaches of our souls.

-Jonathan Magonet

## עמידה - Standing Prayer for Neilah – The Amidah

Together:

We share this day with ones who once were strangers, who now, as evening falls, have become familiar. We offer our prayers together in common appeal that they be understood, that we be understood. May it be Your will, our God and God of our parents and grandparents, to turn our hearts to the work each of us needs to do. Help fill our hearts with love and caring, and our hands with peaceful endeavor. Help us to be worthy to cherish our days and to see the goodness and many blessings, though sometimes obscured, which fill the world everywhere. As we rise once more for the *Amidah*, the last time on this High Holiday, let our lips function as worthy vessels for Your praise.

*Read/chant silently; Cantor will repeat.*

*Baruch atah Adonai,  
Eloheinu v'Elo-hei avoteinu v'imoteinu,  
Elo-hei Avraham, Elo-hei Yitzchak,  
Vei-lohei Ya'acov  
V'Elo-hei Sarah, Elo-hei Rivka,  
Elo-hei Rachel, v'Elo-hei Leah.  
Ha'Eyl hagadol, hagibor v'hanora,  
Eyl elyon, gomel hasadim tovim,  
V'koneh hakol.*

ברוך אתה יי, ברוך הוא, וברוך שמו  
אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו ואמותינו,  
אלוהי אברהם, אלוהי יצחק,  
ואלוי יעקב,  
אלוהי שרה, אלוהי ריבקה,  
אלוהי רחל, ואלהי לאה.  
האל הגדול, הגיבור והנורא,  
אל עליון, גומל חסדים טובים,  
וקנה הכל.

*V'zocher has-dei avot v'ima-hoht,  
Umay-vee go-eyl liv'nei bnei-hem  
L'ma-an sh'mo b'ahavah.*

וזכר חסדי אבות ואמהות,  
ומביא גואל לבני בניהם  
למען שמו באהבה.

Together:

(Zochreynu chant)

*Zoch-reynu li-chayim,  
Melech cha-fetz b'chayim,  
V'chat-veynu be-sefer ha-chayim,  
li-ma-ancha eloheem chayim.*

זכרינו לחיים,  
מלך חפץ בחיים,  
וכתבינו בספר החיים,  
למעןך אלהים חיים.

Zoch-reynu, Remember, is an insertion that ends with the word *chayim*, ...that we and God should look to the future and plan for good things, plan for life!

*Melech ozer u-moshiah u-magen.  
Baruch atah Adonai,  
Magen Avraham u-fokeid Sarah.*

מלך עוזר ומושיע ומגן.  
ברוך אתה יי, ברוך הוא, וברוך שמו  
מגן אברהם ופוקד שרה.

Blessed is Adonai, the shield of Abraham and the One who blessed Sarah.

*Atah gibor l'olam, Adonai,  
m'chayeh meitim atah, rav l'hoshia.*

אַתָּה גִבּוֹר לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי,  
מְחַיֶּה מֵתִים אַתָּה, רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ.

You are the Source and forever, Adonai— You offer life and meaning.

Praised be the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Praised be the God of our mothers, the God of Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. Praised be the Source of strength and courage, the Source of kindness and good deeds. Praised be the Source of gentleness and mercy and love. Praised be the man who transcends strength through gentleness. Praised be the woman who perfects gentleness through strength. Praised be the person who acts according to the best that is within. Praised be the person who reaches out to touch the best in others. Praised be the gentle faithfulness of Abraham and the valiant strength of Sarah. Praised be the God who imaged men and women as partners in completing an unfinished creation.

Remember us for life, You who care for all life, and inscribe us in the Book of Life, for Your sake, O God of Life.

*Yimloch adonai l'olam,  
Eloha-yich tzi-yon,  
Li-dor va-dor, haleluyah.*

יִמְלֹךְ יי לְעוֹלָם,  
אֱלֹהֵיךָ צִיּוֹן,  
לְדוֹר וָדוֹר, הַלְלוּיָהּ.

God is the Constant of all time & space. Your God, O Israel,  
shall remain throughout the generations.

*When Ark doors are closed, we may be seated.*

12<sup>th</sup> Reader Card:

You reach out with a strong hand to those who err.  
You welcome in those who repent.  
You teach us to confess our wrongs to You.  
That we may stop hurting others,  
That we may be welcome in Your presence.

13<sup>th</sup> Reader Card:

Because You know that only dust awaits us in the end,  
You are merciful to us.  
You pardon us when we seek You.

God, my source,  
Can You absorb all my  
faults?  
Can You take them in?  
For I cannot,  
Without You,  
Become untangled  
--Menachem Lorberbaum

14<sup>th</sup> Reader Card:

What are we? Of what value is our life?  
What is our goodness, what our righteousness?  
What help can we offer those in distress?  
What is our strength, what our conviction, what our resolve?

15<sup>th</sup> Reader Card:

What can we say before You, Adonai, our God?  
-- God of all our forebearers?  
For in Your presence  
Mighty ones are as nothing  
The wisest sages as the ignorant.  
In Your hands, all of our lives are but vapor in the wind,  
All humanity seems scarcely more than dreams.

16<sup>th</sup> Reader Card:

What shall we say before You?  
What stories can we tell You?  
Do You not already know all that we reveal or try to hide?

17<sup>th</sup> Reader Card:

Indeed, nothing is hidden from You,  
With understanding You examine our thoughts and imaginings.

18<sup>th</sup> Reader Card:

May You wipe away the significance of all our wrongs  
And guide us along right paths.  
As this Day of Atonement draws to a close,  
May you accept our honest attempts to atone for all of our sins.

## The Vidui – Recollection of Vows and Shortcomings

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ.

Reader/

Cantor:

תָּבֹא לְפָנֶיךָ תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ וְאֵל תִּתְעַלֵּם מִתְחַנְתָּנוּ. שְׂאִין אֲנַחְנוּ  
עֲזֵי פָנִים וְקָשִׁי עֶרְף לֹמֵר לְפָנֶיךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי  
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ צְדִיקִים אֲנַחְנוּ וְלֹא חָטְאוּ אָבֵל אֲנַחְנוּ חָטְאוּנוּ:

Together:

Our God and God of our ancestors, may our prayers come before You. Do not turn away from our heartfelt needs. We are not so hard-faced and stiff-necked to say to You: "We are *tzadiks* - righteous ones - and we have not made mistakes; rather, we have fallen short and at times, harmed others."

אֲשַׁמְנוּ, בָּגַדְנוּ, גָּזַלְנוּ, דִּבַּרְנוּ דָּפִי.

*Ashamnu, Bagadnu, Gazalnu, Debarnu dofi.*

הֶעָוִינוּ, וְהִרְשַׁעְנוּ, זָדַנוּ, חָמְסָנוּ, טָפְלָנוּ שְׂקָר.

*He'evinu, Hirshanu, Zadnu, Chamasnu, Tafalnu sheker.*

יַעֲצָנוּ רָע, כְּזָבְנוּ, לָצָנוּ, מָרְדְּנוּ, נֶאֱצָנוּ.

*Ya'atznu ra, ki-zavnu, Latznu, Maradnu, Nee-atznu.*

סָרְרָנוּ, עָוִינוּ, פָּשַׁעְנוּ, צָרְרָנוּ, קָשִׁינוּ עֶרְף.

*Sararnu, Aveenu, Pashanu, Tzararnu, Kishinu oref.*

רָשַׁעְנוּ, שְׁחַתְנוּ, תַּעֲבָנוּ, תַּעֲיִינוּ, תַּעֲתָעְנוּ.

*Rashanu, Shichatnu, Ti-avnu, Ta-eenu, Tee-ta-nu.*

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 xenophobic.

We yield to fear, we are zealots for bad causes.

*Please remain standing.*

## אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ - Avinu Malkeynu

*chanted together*

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ.

*Avinu Malkeinu, hear our voice.*

... *shma koleynu.*

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, חָטְאָנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ.

*Avinu Malkeinu, we have erred before You.*

... *chatanu lifanecha.*

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, חַמּוֹל עָלֵינוּ וְעַל עוֹלָלֵינוּ וְטַפֵּינוּ.

*Avinu Malkeinu,*

... *chamol aleinu v'al ohla-leynu v'tapeynu.*

*have compassion on us and on our children.*

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, כִּלְה דְּבַר וְחָרֵב וְרָעַב מְעַלֵּינוּ.

*Avinu Malkeinu,*

... *kaleh dever v'cherev v'ra-av mey-aleinu.*

*end sickness, war, and hunger.*

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, כִּלְה כָּל-צָר וּמִשְׁטֵיִן מְעַלֵּינוּ.

*Avinu Malkeinu, end oppression.*

... *kaleh kol tzar u-masteen mey-aleinu.*

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, כָּתִבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר חַיִּים טוֹבִים.

*Avinu Malkeinu, write us*

... *kaht-venu be-sefer chayim tovim.*

*in the Book of Life for good things.*

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, חַדֵּשׁ עָלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה.

*Avinu Malkeinu, bring to us a Good Year.*

... *chadesh aleinu shanah tovah.*

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, מַלֵּא יָדֵינוּ מִבְּרָכוֹתֶיךָ.

*Avinu Malkeinu, fill our hands with blessing.*

... *maleh yadenu mee-birchotecha.*

*Avinu Malkeinu, chaneinu vi-anay-nu (2x)*

*Kee ayn banu ma-asim*

*Aseh eemanu, tzdakah v'chesed (2x)*

*V'hoshee-yaynu.*

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, חַנּוּנוּ וְעֲנֵנוּ

כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים,

עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד

וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

*Avinu Malkeinu, be gracious and answer us, for we have little merit.*

*Treat us generously and with kindness, and be our help.*

*The Ark is closed; we may be seated.*

## Parable of the Diamond

The Dubner *Maggid* offers the "parable of the diamond" to guide our steps: A king once owned a large and beautiful diamond of which he was very proud. It had no equal for beauty and for balance and it had appreciable size. One day, the diamond sustained a deep scratch. The king was quite upset. He summoned the most skilled diamond cutters from across his kingdom and even beyond. He offered them a great reward if they could only *remove* the blemish. Each studied the gem and analyzed the alternatives. But they all shook their heads, unable to arrive at a satisfactory course of repair.

Months passed before, one day, a gifted craftsman who had heard about the king's diamond, came to the king. He smiled a smile of knowledge and assurance. The king looked into his eyes and felt he could trust this man (it is said that the eyes reveal the soul). The craftsman promised to make the rare diamond even more beautiful than before the mishap.

The king grew elated with hope and decided to trust the confidence of this craftsman. He entrusted his precious gem to the craftsman's care.

And with a steady hand and superb vision, the craftsman kept his word. Slowly, out of the ragged scratch ...that became a stem, there emerged a beautiful and delicate rosebud!

And so the *Maggid*, the old storyteller, teaches us that even from terrible and scarring tragedy, there can emerge, guided by enough intention, skill and wisdom, gems with even greater beauty and substance.

We can imagine that the gems of our story are ourselves and the craftsmen are those with wisdom and insight who we encounter, seemingly inspired with message and meaning intended just for ourselves. May we be blessed to encounter them.

We rise.

Cantor/hazzan and congregation:

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד.

*Shema yisrael, Adonai Eloheynu, Adonai echad.*

Hear, O Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is One.

Cantor/hazzan and congregation, 3 times:

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

*Ba-ruch sheim kavod mal-chuto l'olam va-ed.*

Praised be God's mysterious order throughout all time.

Cantor/hazzan and congregation, 7 times:

יְיָ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים. *Adonai hu ha-Eloheem.*

The Lord alone is God.

*The Shofar is sounded.*

תְּקִיעַה גְּדוּלָה -- *TEKIAH GEDOLAH*

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם. *Next year in Jerusalem!*

A closing blessing concludes the Neilah Service..