II

We have come together tonight in accordance with hallowed Jewish tradition, so that our mourners may worship with a Minyan, and thus be enabled to recite the Kaddish prayer.

But more than tradition alone has brought us together. We have been drawn here by bonds of friendship and caring, and by the hope that our presence may bring some solace and support to the bereaved.

At this time of suffering, pain, and of longing, may those who mourn find some comfort in the knowledge that others are touched by their sorrow and seek to share their burden of grief.

We pray with the bereaved and for the bereaved. May they find the strength, the courage, and the faith which they need at this difficult time.

Like the Psalmist who asked in a time of trouble: “From where shall my help come?” may they, too, be enabled to answer: “My help comes from the Lord.”

May they be sustained by the realization that while death has taken away so much, there is still much over which death has no dominion.

Death has robbed them of what might have been; but it cannot take away what has already been. The lessons they have learned, the years they have shared, the memories they treasure—these remain their precious possessions.

We pray that they may be helped to trust patiently in the fulfillment of the Divine promise, spoken to the prophet:

“I will change their grief to gladness, I will console and cheer them after their sorrow.”

III

This home has been darkened by the shadow of death. We gather here to pray that the bereaved may find comfort in their grief and courage to face the trials which this sorrow has brought upon them.

O Lord, we turn to You in the faith that through communion with You we shall find fortitude, and that You, our loving Parent, will now keep our departed in Your tender care.

God of mercy, Source of all consolation, comfort those whose hearts are heavy with grief. Though now they mourn, may they not despair; though now they grieve, may they not surrender to bitterness. Help them to endure their sorrow, and to find strength through their steadfast trust in You. Amen.

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Prayers on behalf of those who mourn

One of these meditations may be selected for recitation by the Reader, or by another participant, unrelated to the deceased.

I

Eternal God, from whom we come and to whom we belong and return, we have gathered in this home darkened by sorrow, hoping that our mourners may be comforted by our presence, and linking ourselves in tribute to our departed.

As we join in reciting the prayers prescribed by our tradition, we add prayers which come from our hearts.

We pray that our mourners may find courage in this time of profound need.

With the Psalmist of old, may they be enabled to say: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow, I fear no evil, for You are with me.”

We pray that the mourners may find strength to carry their burden of grief.

May they experience the fulfillment of the prophetic promise: “The Lord gives power to the faint; and to those without might God increases strength.”

We pray that the mourners may find some measure of comfort to console them in their bereavement.

May the hope of which the prophet spoke sustain them: “As a mother comforts her child so will I, the Lord, comfort you.”

We pray that the mourners may find healing, to restore their lives, after their mourning for this loss.

May they know, as did the Psalmist, that God “heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.”

As we join in prayer in this hour of sorrow, we are united in faith, in memory, and in hope.

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[17] PRAYERS AND READINGS
My help comes from the Lord

I lift my eyes to the mountains;
From where will my help come?
   My help comes from the Lord
   Who made heaven and earth.
Trust in the Lord at all times;
Pour out your heart before the Lord.
   In all your ways acknowledge God;
   And God will direct your paths.
The Lord is our refuge and strength,
An ever-present help in times of trouble.
   The Lord is near to all who call upon God,
   To all who call upon God in truth.
The Lord redeems the souls of servants of the Lord;
Those who trust in God shall not feel forsaken.
   God's compassions and God's mercies
   Have been established from of old.
God is the Parent of the orphan,
And the advocate of the widow's cause.
   The Lord heals the broken-hearted,
   And binds up their wounds.
Though my flesh and my heart fail,
The Lord is my strength and my portion forever.

Selected Biblical Verses

"GOD'S MERCY IN TIMES OF TROUBLE"

God's mercy cannot shield us from crisis or pain; and trouble is our common lot as human beings. But God's mercy can help us to survive trouble, to become stronger as we confront it—and perhaps to grow in character, compassion, and wisdom because of it.

Adina N. Samuelson (adapted)

PRAYERS AND READINGS

Let your heart take courage

Cast your burden upon the Lord,
And the Lord will sustain you.
   In the Lord do I trust;
   I shall not be afraid.
The Lord is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
   The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
   Of whom shall I be afraid?
O Lord of hosts,
Happy are those who trust in You.
   Show me Your ways, O Lord;
   Teach me Your paths.
The Lord is near to the broken-hearted,
And saves those who are contrite in spirit.
   Turn to me, O Lord, and be gracious to me,
   For I am lonely and forlorn.
Pour out your heart before God;
For the Lord is our refuge.
   My troubles are increased;
   O bring me out of my distress.
The Lord upholds all who fall,
And raises up all who are bowed down.
   Though I am fallen, I shall rise again.
   Though I dwell in darkness, You shall be my light.
God gives power to the weary,
And grants strength to the weak.
   Be strong and let your heart take courage,
   All who wait for the Lord.
Yea, they who hope in You, O Lord,
Shall renew their strength. Amen.

Selected Biblical Verses

PRAYERS AND READINGS
Maariv: Evening Service

"And God, being merciful, forgives sin and does not destroy, repeatedly refraining from anger, and avoiding indignation. O Lord, redeem us! O our Sovereign, answer us when we call."

BARHU: The call to worship

Reader:
Praise the Lord, Source of all blessing.

Congregation and Reader:
Praised be the Lord, Source of all blessing, forever.

MAARIV ARAVIM: Lord of night and day

Praised are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Whose word brings on the dusk of evening.

Your wisdom opens the gates of dawn;
Your understanding regulates time and seasons.

The stars follow their appointed rounds,
In response to Your divine will.

You create day and night;
You alternate darkness and light.

You remove the day and bring on the night;
You separate one from the other.

We call You “Lord of heavenly hosts”;
You are our living God.

May You rule over us as You rule over nature;
Praised are You, O Lord, who brings the evening dusk.

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Maariv: Evening Service

Reader:

Congregation and Reader:

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[27]

EVENING SERVICE

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MAARIV

* Asterisk denotes verses chanted by Reader.
Ahavat Olam:
God's love expressed through Torah and Mitzvot

With everlasting love You have loved Your people, the
House of Israel, teaching us the Torah and its Mitzvot,
instructing us in its laws and judgments.

Therefore, O Lord our God, when we lie down and when
we rise up we shall speak of Your commandments and
rejoice in Your Torah and Mitzvot.

For they are our life and the length of our days; on them
we will meditate day and night. May Your love never
depart from us. Praised are You, O Lord, who loves Your
people Israel.

Reflections on Ahavat Olam:
A Meditation in the House of Mourning

With everlasting love have You loved us, O God,
Revealing Yourself to us through Torah and Mitzvot.

Your love is also revealed through our dear ones,
Whose love has been a benediction in our lives.

For we have known the blessings of love and caring,
And death cannot take these gifts from us.

Your love, O God, is revealed as well
In our strength to carry on, to find our way again.

For while pain and suffering are real,
Your healing power is at work in our lives,

Enabling us to endure our sorrow;
To transform our pain, and to find courage to go on.

From the darkness of our grief, O Lord,
May rays of understanding shine forth,

That we may grow in wisdom,
And perform deeds of lovingkindness,

Nurturing our heritage of love and Torah
Which reveal Your presence anew in every age.
The Shema

Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.

Praised be God’s glorious sovereignty for ever and ever.

V’AHAVTA: You shall love the Lord

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might. You shall take to heart these words which I command you this day. You shall teach them diligently to your children, speaking of them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down at night and when you rise up in the morning. You shall bind them as a sign upon your arm, and they shall be a reminder above your eyes. You shall inscribe them on the doorposts of your homes and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

THE SHEMA: A call to witness

In the Torah scroll, the word “Sh’mā” is written with an enlarged final ayin (י'); and the word “Eḥad” with an enlarged final daled (ד'). These two letters form the Hebrew word יד (Eyd) which means “witness.”

Whenever we recite the Sh’mā, we are responding to the Divine call: Atem Eydai, you are My witnesses (Isaiah 43:10); and we are reminded of our vocation to be God’s “witnesses”—in both our personal and collective lives.

(Ben Saul & H. J. Malt)

V’AHAVTA: To love God

Whether a person really loves God can be determined by the love which that person bears toward others. (Levi Yitzhak of Berdichiv)

V’AHAVTA: Love leading to action

In Judaism, love of God is never a mere feeling; it belongs to the sphere of ethical action.

(Leo Baeck)

Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheynu, Adonai Ehad.

[Baruḥ sheym k’vod mal-ḥuto l’olam va-ed.]

V’havta eyt Adonai Eloheha
B’hol l’vavha, u-v’hol naf-sh’ha, u-v’hol m’odeha.
V’ha-yu ha-d’varim ha-eyelehem
Asher anohi m’tza-v’ha ha-yom al l’v-veelah.
V’shi-nan-tam l’va-neha v’dibarta bam
B’shiv-t’ha b’vey-teha u-v’le-h-t’ha va-derelah,
U-v’sho-sh’ta ha u-v’ku-meelah.
U-k’shar-tam l’ot al ya-deelah,
V’ha-yu l’totafot beyn eyneelah.
U-h’tav-tam al m’zuzot bey-tehah u-vish-areelah.

MAARIV
KEEP THESE WORDS

If you will faithfully obey the commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God and to serve the Lord with all your heart and all your soul, then I will favor your land with rain at the proper season, in autumn and in spring; and you will harvest your grain and wine and oil. I will give grass in the fields for your cattle. You will eat and be satisfied.

Take care not to be lured away to worship other gods. For then the wrath of the Lord will be directed against you: The heavens will close and there will be no rain; the land will not yield its produce; and you will soon perish from the good land which the Lord gave you.

Therefore, keep these words of Mine in your heart and in your soul. Bind them as a sign upon your arm, and let them be a reminder above your eyes. Teach them to your children, speaking of them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down at night and when you rise up in the morning. Write them upon the doorposts of your homes and upon your gates. Thus your days and the days of your children will be multiplied on the land which the Lord promised to your ancestors for as long as the heavens remain over the earth.

Deuteronomy 11:23-21

It is not enough to serve God in anticipation of future reward. One must do right and avoid wrong because as a human being one is obliged to seek perfection.

(Maimonides)

Rejoice so greatly in performing a Mitzvah that you will desire no other reward than the opportunity to perform another Mitzvah!

(Nahman of Breslau)

Rav Aha said: God has made uncertain the reward of those who perform the commandments of the Torah so that we might perform them in fidelity.

(Talmud Yerushalmi, Peah)

The reward for a good deed is another good deed; and the penalty for a transgression is another transgression.

(Pirkei Avot 4:2)

Do not be like servants who serve their master; for the sake of receiving a reward; be rather like servants who devotedly serve their master with no thought of a reward; and may the awe of God be upon you.

(Pirkei Avot 1:3)

The main purpose of the Mitzvot performed through physical action is to make us sensitive to those Mitzvot performed with the heart and mind, which are the pillars of the service of God.

(Babylon)

If you think of reward, you think of yourself, not God.

(Israel Salanter)
TO SEE, TO REMEMBER, AND TO OBSERVE!

The Lord said to Moses: “Speak to the Children of Israel, and bid them to make fringes in the corners of their garments throughout their generations, putting upon the fringe of each corner a thread of blue. “When you look upon the fringe you will be reminded of all the commandments of the Lord and obey them. You will not be led astray by the inclination of your heart or by the attraction of your eyes.

“Thus will you be reminded to fulfill all My commandments and be consecrated to your God. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. “I, the Lord, am your God.”

Numbers 15:37-41

AN EXODUS FOR THOSE WHO MOURN

Our Sages debated whether the Biblical passage commanding the wearing of fringes (Tzitzit) should be recited in the evening service as it is in the morning service. Since the passage says, “When you look upon the fringes…” perhaps it ought not be recited at night, since in the dark we cannot “look upon them.”

In the end, an ingenious interpretation of one of the words led to the decision that the passage should indeed be included in the evening service.

In the house of mourning it is reassuring to read this passage which concludes with a reminder that God brought our ancestors out of Egyptian bondage. In the dark night of suffering, God “saw” our people’s affliction and “heard” their groaning.

The Lord who liberated our ancestors from their burdens of pain and suffering is the God of love who can liberate us from our burdens of grief and sorrow.

In the dark night of bereavement, our faith in God can strengthen our hope that our mourners too shall experience an exodus from suffering, and move toward the promised land of healing.
True and certain it is that there is One God.
And there is none like the Lord.
It is God who redeemed us from the might of tyrants,
And delivered us from slavery to freedom.
Great are the things that God has done.

As You delivered Israel from a mightier power,
So may You redeem all Your children from oppression.
Praised are You, O Lord, Redeemer of Israel.

Who is like You, O Lord, among the mighty?
When You rescued Israel at the Sea,
You glorified Your might.
And sung in joyous thanksgiving.
They accepted Your sovereignty willingly.
And gave thanks to You and praised Your name.

And guard all Your children from disaster.
May You continue Your protecting care over Israel, O Lord.
Proclaimed in great exaltation.
Moses and the Children of Israel.
When the Children of Israel beheld Your might.

It is Adonai Eloheynu yevo zuto, ve-adonai yisrael.
* ki hu Adonai Eloheynu yevo zuto, ve-adonai yisrael.
* Nona thelit osev fe-leh ... Adonai yimlah fulam ve-cah.
HASHKIVENU: Help us to lie down in peace

Help us, O God, to lie down in peace;
And awaken us to life on the morrow.
May we always be guided by Your good counsel,
And thus find shelter in Your tent of peace.
Shield us, we pray, against our foes,
Against plague, destruction, and sorrow.
Strengthen us against the evil forces
Which abound on every side.
May we always sense Your care,
For You are our merciful Sovereign.
Guard us always and everywhere;
Bless us with life and peace.
Praise to You, O God of peace,
Who guards Your people Israel
Now and evermore.

Reflections on “Hashkivenu”
(To be recited by friends of the mourners)

Help us, O God, to lie down in peace;
And awaken us with confident trust for tomorrow.
Strengthen those who are burdened with sorrow,
Grant them patience, courage, and strength.
Guide them, O Lord, with Your good counsel;
Direct them toward the path of serenity.
Shield them, we pray, from every enemy,
From fear, from anxiety, from despair.
Help them to feel protected and sheltered,
Sustained, even in grief, by Your compassion.
Guard them this night and every night;
Bless them with healing and hope.
Help them, O Lord, to lie down in peace;
Awaken them with confident trust for tomorrow.
To remember with reverence

Let us be silent with our ancestors,
Remember with reverence their ancient prayer,
Pronounced for millennia, their words, their faith.

Gather the gleanings with thanks,
The marvelous gleanings,
Those we can share in truth to ourselves
And our sense, and our thinking.

Shine in the glow of their vision with gladness,
That we may build as their seed
Upon their soul’s searching
Seeking for meaning in the mystery of life and of being.

Through justice, mercy, truth, and peace,
Through love of others, and through humility.

Emil Weitzner

Our God and God of our ancestors

Why do we say both “Our God” and “God of our ancestors”? There are two kinds of people who believe in God. One believes by virtue of taking over the faith of parents; the other has arrived at faith through thinking and studying.

The advantage of one is that, no matter what arguments may be brought against it, this faith cannot be shaken; it is firm because it was taken over from one’s parents. But there is one flaw in it: it is faith only in response to a human command, acquired without studying and thinking for one’s self.

The advantage of the other is that, because God has been found through much thinking, the believer has arrived at a personal faith, independently. But here, too, there is a flaw: this faith can be shaken through refutation.

But the person who unites both kinds of faith is invincible. And so we say “Our God” with reference to our personal studies, and “God of our ancestors” with an eye to tradition.

The same interpretation has been given to our saying, “God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob,” rather than “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” For this indicates that Isaac and Jacob did not merely take over the tradition of Abraham; each of them personally searched for God.

Boaz Shem Tov, retold by Martin Buber (adapted)

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HATZI KADDISH

Magnified and sanctified be the great name of God, in the world created according to the Divine will. May God’s sovereignty soon be established, in our lifetime and that of the entire House of Israel. And let us say: Amen.

Congregation and Reader:

Y'hey sh'mey raba m'varah l'alam ul-almey alma-ya (yit-barah).

May God’s great name be praised to all eternity.

Hallowed and honored, extolled and exalted, adored and acclaimed be the name of the blessed Holy One, whose glory is above all the praises, hymns, and songs of adoration which human beings can utter. And let us say: Amen.

*Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur: לַעֲלָה לַעֲלָה כָכָל [45]

EVENING SERVICE

MAARIV [44]
The Maariv Amidah: Interpretive Opening Blessings

"O Lord, open my lips that my mouth may declare Your praise."

GOD OF ALL GENERATIONS
Praised are You, O Lord 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, and exalted One—
You bestow lovingkindness upon all Your children.
You remember the merits of our ancestors,
And lovingly offer redemption to their descendants,
In accordance with Your great name.

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur add:
Remember us for life, O Sovereign who delights in life;
Inscribe us in the book of life, for Your sake, O God of life.

You are our Sovereign and Helper, our Savior and Protector.
Praised are You, O Lord, Shield of Abraham and Sustainer of Sarah.

SOURCE OF LIFE AND MASTER OF NATURE
Eternal is Your power, O Lord;
Your salvation embraces the living and the dead.

From Shemini Atzeret to Pesah add:
You cause the wind to blow and the rain to fall.
In lovingkindness You sustain the living:
Your mercies confer life upon the departed.
You uphold the falling, heal the sick, and free the captives;
You keep faith with Your children, even in death.
Who is like You, incomparable Lord of mighty deeds,
Ruler of life and death, Source of redemption?

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur add:
Who is like You, compassionate God?
Mercifully You remember Your creatures for life.
Praised are You, O Lord, who grants to the departed eternal life.

ON THE INTERPRETIVE OPENING BLESSINGS
While preserving most of the imagery and language of the traditional Amidah Opening Blessings, the "Interpretive Version" employs more inclusive references to our Ancestors (both Patriarchs and Matriarchs), while offering, as an alternative option, the Hebrew word "Geulah" (Redemption), a term which lends itself to broad interpretation. (ANS)
Holy are You and hallowed is Your name, and holy ones praise You daily. Praised are You, O Lord, *the holy God.

You graciously endow human beings with intelligence, and You teach mortals understanding.

Special passage for the conclusion of Shabbat or a Festival:

You have favored us with the knowledge of Your Torah; You have taught us to fulfill the Commandments. O Lord our God, You have made a distinction between the holy and the ordinary, between light and darkness, between the people Israel and the heathens, between the seventh day and the six weekdays. Avinu Malkeynu, may the coming days begin for us in peace. May we be free from sin, clear of wrongdoing, and drawn closer to You in reverence.

O grant us knowledge, understanding, and discernment. Praised are You, O Lord, gracious giver of knowledge.

Bring us back O God, as would a loving parent, to Your Torah. Draw us near, O our Sovereign, to Your service. Lead us back to You in wholehearted repentance. Praised are You, O Lord, who desires repentance.

Forgive us O God, as would a loving parent, for we have sinned. Pardon us, O our Sovereign, for we have transgressed. For You, our God, do indeed forgive and pardon. Praised are You, O Lord, who abundantly pardons.

Behold our affliction and champion our cause. Redeem us soon for Your sake, for You are a mighty Redeemer. Praised are You, O Lord, Redeemer of Israel.

Heal us, O Lord, and we shall be healed; help us and we shall be saved; for You are our glory. Grant complete healing for all our afflictions, for You, O our Divine Ruler, are a faithful and merciful healer. Praised are You, O Lord, Healer of Your people Israel.

*From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur conclude: the holy Sovereign.

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[49] EVENING SERVICE

MAARIV
Lord our God, bless this year for us, and grant all varieties of produce for our well-being.

*From Pesah through December 3.*
Send blessing to the whole earth.

*From December 4** until Pesah:
Send dew and rain to bless the whole earth.

Satisfy us in this year with the blessing of Your bounty. Praised are You, O Lord, who blesses the years.

Sound the great Shofar for our liberation. Lift up a banner to ingather our exiles, and bring our dispersed together from the four corners of the earth. Praised are You, O Lord, who gathers our exiles.

Restore our judges as in days of old, and our counsellors as in former times. Remove from us grief and sighing. May You alone reign over us, O Lord, in love and mercy, and vindicate us in judgment. Praised are You, O Lord, our Sovereign, who loves righteousness and justice.

*Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur conclude: Sovereign of Judgment.

May slanderers find no hope, and may all wickedness perish swiftly. May all Your enemies be speedily cut down; may the arrogant be uprooted and crushed. May You overthrow and humble them soon, in our own day. Praised are You, O Lord, who crushes the enemies and subdues the arrogant.

*In a secular leap year: through December 4.
**In a secular leap year: from December 5.
Lord our God, may Your compassion be stirred for the righteous, for the pious, for the leaders of Your people Israel, for our devoted scholars, for the true proselytes, and for us. Reward bountifully all who truly trust in You, and cast our lot among them. May we never be put to shame, for we trust in You.

Praised are You, O Lord, the support and trust of the righteous.

With mercy, return Your Presence to Jerusalem, Your city; and abide within it, in accordance with Your ancient promise. Rebuild it, speedily, in our own day, and may it endure for all time.

Some say: Renew within it the glory of David.

Praised are You, O Lord, who rebuilds Jerusalem.

In Your mercy, cause the progeny of the House of Israel to flourish; and may Your people then be exalted and strengthened, as we recall Your promise of deliverance. For we await Your redemption at all times.

Praised are You, O Lord, Source of our redemption.

O Lord our God, hear our plea. Have pity upon us; and in Your great mercy, accept our prayer with loving favor. Compassionate God, who hearkens to prayer, do not send us away without considering our supplications. For You, our merciful Sovereign, hear the prayers of Your people, the House of Israel.

Praised are You, O Lord, who hearkens to prayer.
ACCEPT OUR PRAYER AND BLESS ZION

Be gracious to Your people Israel, O Lord our God, and lovingly accept their prayers. May our worship ever be acceptable to You.

On Rosh Hodesh add:

Our God and God of our ancestors, we recall and invoke the remembrance of our ancestors, the piety of their prayers for Messianic deliverance, the glory of Jerusalem, Your holy city, and the destiny of the entire Household of Israel. As we seek Your love and mercy, we pray for deliverance and for life, for happiness and for peace, on this Rosh Hodesh.

Remember us, O Lord; bless us with all that is good. Recall Your promise of merciful redemption; spare us, have compassion upon us, and graciously save us. To You we lift our eyes in hope; for You, our Sovereign, are a gracious and merciful God.

May our eyes behold Your merciful return to Zion. Praise to You, O Lord, who restores the Divine Presence to Zion.

THANKSGIVING FOR DAILY MIRACLES

We thankfully acknowledge You, our God and God of our ancestors, Lord of eternity. You are the source of our strength, even as You have been Israel’s protecting shield in every generation.

We thank You and proclaim Your praise for our lives which are in Your hand, for our souls which are in Your care, for Your miracles which are daily with us, and for Your wondrous kindness at all times—morning, noon, and night. Source of all goodness, Your mercies never fail. Source of compassion, Your kindnesses never cease. You are our abiding hope.

On Hanukkah and Purim add Al Ha-Nisim, page 97.
For all Your blessings we shall praise and exalt You, O our Sovereign, forever.

_Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur add:_
Inscribe all the children of Your Covenant for a good life.

May all living creatures ever thank You and praise You in truth. O God, You are our deliverance and our help. Praised are You, beneficent Lord, to whom all praise is due.

**BLESS US WITH PEACE**

Grant lasting peace to Your people Israel, for You are the sovereign Lord of peace. May it please You to bless Your people Israel, in every season and at every hour, with Your peace.* Praised are You, O Lord, who blesses Your people Israel with peace.

*A brief personal prayer may be recited here.

Continue with “Guard my tongue from evil” on the following page.
GUARD MY TONGUE FROM EVIL

O Lord,
Guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking guile;
And to those who slander me, let me give no heed.
May my soul be humble and forgiving to all.
Open my heart, O Lord, to Your sacred Law,
That Your statutes I may know and all Your truths pursue.
Frustrate the designs of those who seek to do me ill;
Speedily defeat their aims and thwart their purposes—
For the sake of Your glory and Your power,
For the sake of Your holiness and Law.
That Your loved ones may be delivered, O Lord,
Answer me and save with Your redeeming power.

"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
Be acceptable to You, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer."

O Source of peace and harmony in the universe,
Grant peace to us and to the household of Israel.

Adapted from the Hebrew by Morris Silverman

Amen.

"THE MEDITATIONS OF OUR HEARTS"

The meditations of our hearts are not always "acceptable"
To You, O God, or even to ourselves.
Sometimes our thoughts are bitter with anger,
and sometimes they are sour with remorse.
Sometimes they are dark with doubt,
and sometimes they are heavy with despair.
We acknowledge that we are creatures of many moods;
and that when we face the loss of a loved one,
our emotions may reflect our inner turmoil and deep distress.

Help us to cope with our feelings, with honesty and with patience.
Help us to ponder the immediate in the perspective of the eternal.
In our days of pain and anguish,
in our nights of tearful sorrow,
give us faith, O God, to trust in Your healing power.
Help us to draw strength from the assurance
that Your lovingkindness has not departed from us;
that we will yet know again the blessings of serenity and peace.

Yi-h’yu l’ratzon imrey fi, v’he-g-yon libi l’fa-neha.
Adonai tzuri v’go-ali.

Oseh shalom bi-m’romav, hu ya-aseh shalom
Aleynu v’al kol yisrael, v’imru Amen.
Alenu

Let us now praise the Lord of all;
Let us acclaim the Author of Creation,
Who made us unlike the pagans who surrounded us,
Unlike the heathens of the ancient world,
Who made our heritage different from theirs,
And assigned to us a unique destiny.
We bend the knee and reverently bow
Before the supreme Sovereign,
The Holy One, who is to be praised,
Who spread forth the heavens and established the earth,
And whose glorious presence can be found everywhere.
The Lord is our God; there is no other.
Truly, our sovereign Lord is incomparable.

As it is written in the Torah:
“This day accept, with mind and heart,
That God is the Lord of heaven and earth;
There is no other.”

(Alenu continues on following page)

Among the themes which find majestic expression in the Alenu are thanksgiving for the unique religious heritage of the Jewish People, and confident hope for a world transformed, under the sovereignty of our Creator.

When the realities of the world (or of our lives) discourage or distress us, the Alenu reminds us of our Vocation, calls upon us to reaffirm our Faith, and redirects our troubled thoughts toward a future of renewed hope.

(Reflections on Alenu, Ben Saul)

SHEH-HU NOTEH SHAMA-YIM

Sheh-hu noteh shama-yim v’yoseyd aretz,
U-mo-shav y’kar ba-shama-yim mi-maal,
U-sh’hinat uzo b’gov-hey m’romim.
Hu Eloheynu eyn od,
Emet mal-keynu efes zu-lato, ka-katuv b’torato,
V’yada-ta ha-yom va-ha-shey-vota el l’va-veha
Ki Adonai hu ha-Elohim
Ba-shama-yim mi-maal v’al ha-aretz mi-tahat, eyn od.

In the Alenu, we reverently acclaim God as Creator of the universe; we affirm the distinctive character of our People and our Faith; and we pray, with hope, for the salvation of all God’s children, looking beyond the idolatries which still abound.

Alenu is thus a quintessential Jewish prayer; for here the voices of the “universal” and the “particular” are joined, in a chorus of faith and hope.

Aleynu l’sha-bey-ah la-adon ha-kol,
La-tet-y g’dula l’ytzeyr b’reyshit.
Sheh-lo asanu k’go-yey ha-aratzot,
V’lo samanu k’ mish-p’hot ha-adama.
Sheh-lo sam hel-keynu ka-hem,
V’gora-leynu k’hol hamonam.
Va-anahnenu kor-im u-mishta-havim u-modim,
Lifney meleh malhey ha-m’lahim,
Ha-kadosh baruh hu.

MAARIV
WE THEREFORE HOPE . . .

I  We therefore hope in You, O Lord our God, that we may soon behold the glory of Your might, when You will remove the abominations from the earth and when all idolatry will be abolished. We hope for the day when the world will be perfected under the “Kingdom of the Almighty,” and all humanity will call upon Your name; when You will turn unto Yourself all the wicked of the earth. May all the inhabitants of the world perceive and know that unto You every knee must bend, every tongue vow loyalty. Before You, O Lord our God, may they bow in worship, giving honor unto Your glorious name. May they all accept the yoke of Your kingdom; and may You rule over them speedily and forevermore. For the kingdom is Yours and to all eternity You will reign in glory. As it is written in Your Torah: The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. And it has been foretold: The Lord shall be Sovereign over all the earth; on that day the Lord shall be One and God’s name One.  

Morris Silverman (adapted)

BECAUSE WE BELIEVE IN YOU

II  Because we believe in You, O God,  
we hope for the day when Your majesty will prevail,  
when all false gods will be removed,  
and all idolatry will be abolished;  
when the world will be made a “Kingdom of God,”  
when all humanity will invoke Your name,  
and the wicked will be turned to You.  
May all the living fervently acknowledge  
that to You every knee must bend,  
every tongue vow loyalty.  
before You may all bow in reverence,  
proclaiming Your glory, accepting Your sovereignty.  
May Your reign come soon and last forever;  
for sovereignty is Yours alone, now and evermore.  
So is it written in Your Torah:  
“The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.”  
The prophet too, proclaimed this promise:  
“The Lord shall reign over all the earth;  
on that day the Lord shall be One and God’s name One.”

A PROPHETIC VISION OF THE FUTURE (Isaiah 2:2-4)

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the House of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it. And many peoples shall come and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob, so that we may be taught God’s ways, and walk in God’s paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth Torah, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

The Lord shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

V’ne-emar, v’ha-ya Adonai l’meleḥ al kol ha-aretz.
Ba-yom ha-hu yi-h’yeh Adonai eḥad u-sh’mo eḥad.
Meditations before the Kaddish

I Eternal God, who sends consolation to all sorrowing hearts, we turn to You for solace in this trying hour. Though bowed in grief at the passing of our loved one, we reaffirm our faith in You, our source of life and love.

O Lord, help those who mourn tonight to surmount their sorrow and to face their trial with courage. Give them insight in this hour of grief, so that from the depths of their own suffering may come a deepened sympathy for all who are bereaved.

May they bear their sorrow with trustful hearts; and knowing that You are near, may they not despair.

With faith in Your sustaining power, those who mourn now rise to sanctify Your holy name, in the words of the Mourner’s Kaddish.

II Eternal God, in adversity and joy, You are with us. As we recall our departed, we thank You for their lives, for our companionship with them, and for the cherished memories that they leave behind.

Comfort, we pray, those who mourn tonight. Give them strength in their sorrow, and sustain their faith in Your healing power.

In tribute to our beloved, who now is bound with You in the bond of everlasting life, may our lives be consecrated to Your service.

In solemn testimony to the unbroken faith which links the generations of the House of Israel one to another, those who mourn now rise to sanctify Your holy name, in the words of the Mourner’s Kaddish.

Because we believe in You, O God of healing,
We pray that You will heal those who grieve,
Softening their pain, binding up their wounds,
And wiping the tears from their faces.

Because we believe in You, O God of compassion,
We pray that You will show mercy to the sorrowing,
Sending them strength and courage for today,
Trust and hope for tomorrow.

Because we believe in You, O God of forgiveness,
We pray that You will grant relief from guilt and remorse,
For things done and for things left undone,
For words spoken and words left unspoken.

Because we believe in You, O God of love,
We pray that You will console the heavy-hearted;
Helping them to sense that even in darkness
The light of Your love is still aglow.

Because we believe in You, O God of Eternity,
We pray that You will comfort the bereaved
With the faith that their beloved is bound to You,
In the bond of everlasting life.

Because we believe in You, O God of goodness,
We pray that You will deepen the goodness in each of us,
That we may help, support, and love one another;
And thus share in the gift of Your Divine love.

Morris Silverman (adapted)
Mourners' Kaddish

Magnified and sanctified be the great name of God, in the world created according to the Divine will. May God’s sovereignty soon be established, in our lifetime and that of the entire House of Israel. And let us say: Amen.

Congregation and mourners:

May God’s great name be praised to all eternity.

Hallowed and honored, extolled and exalted, adored and acclaimed be the name of the blessed Holy One, whose glory is above all the praises, hymns, and songs of adoration which human beings can utter. And let us say: Amen.

May God grant abundant peace and life to us and to all Israel. And let us say: Amen.

May God, who ordains harmony in the universe, grant peace to us and to all Israel. And let us say: Amen.

An additional Psalm may be selected from pages 70-77.

A favorite quotation or poem may be recited here.

Psalms for the Penitential Season, page 90.

(Closing Prayers, page 81.)
THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
God makes me lie down in green pastures,
And leads me beside the still waters.
God revives my spirit,
And guides me in paths of righteousness, for God’s name’s sake.
Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil; for You are with me.
Your rod and Your staff comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my foes.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life,
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

[77] PSALMS