

## Evening Service: The Sh'ma and Its Blessings

### The Community and Prayer

Prayer does not depend on “religion” in an institutional sense, nor on dogma or creed, but rather on true heartfelt feelings that arise when a person recognizes that one’s surroundings and one’s friends are not there solely for one’s own happiness, but instead, these relationships give rise to an obligation whose source is in life itself.

—ELIEZER SCHWEID

### God and Nature: An Interpretive Translation

Beloved are You, eternal God,  
by whose design the evening falls,  
by whose command dimensions open up and eons pass away and stars spin in their orbits.

*You set the rhythms of day and night;  
the alternation of light and darkness  
sings Your creating word.*

In rising sun and in spreading dusk,  
Creator of all, You are made manifest.

*Eternal, everlasting God, may we always be aware of Your dominion.*

Beloved are You, Adonai,  
for this hour of nightfall.

—ANDRÉ UNGAR

### Bar'khu: The Call to Worship Together

We rise as we are called by the leader's words of invitation to prayer. The leader bows when saying the word “Bar'khu” (“praise”) and stands up straight when pronouncing “Adonai.” Similarly, the congregation bows at the word “barukh” (“praise”) and straightens to full height at “Adonai.”

An alternate version of this b'rakhah may be found on the following page.

Leader:

Praise ADONAI, to whom all praise is directed.

Congregation, then the leader repeats:

† Praise ADONAI, to whom all praise is directed forever and ever.

Barukh Adonai ha-m'vorakh l'olam va-ed.

We are seated.

### First B'rakhah before the Sh'ma: The Coming of Evening Light

Barukh atah ADONAI, our God, sovereign of time and space,  
whose word brings the evening dusk,  
whose wisdom opens the gates of dawn,  
whose understanding changes the day's division,  
whose will sets the succession of seasons  
and arranges the stars in their places in the sky,  
who creates day and night,  
who rolls light before darkness and darkness from light,  
▶ who makes day pass into night,  
who distinguishes day from night;  
Adonai Tz'va'ot is Your name.  
Living and ever-present God,  
may Your rule be with us, forever and ever.  
Barukh atah ADONAI, who brings each evening's dusk.

We continue with the Second B'rakhah on page 40.

## ערבית: קריאת שמע וברכותיה

We rise as we are called by the leader's words of invitation to prayer. The leader bows when saying the word בָּרַכּוּ (“praise”) and stands up straight when pronouncing יהוה (Adonai). Similarly, the congregation bows at the word בָּרוּךְ (“praise”) and straightens to full height at יהוה (Adonai).

An alternate version of this b'rakhah may be found on the following page.

Leader:

בָּרַכּוּ אֶת־יְהוָה הַמְּבָרָךְ.

Congregation, then the leader repeats:

† בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

We are seated.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְךְ הָעוֹלָם,

אֲשֶׁר בְּדַבְרוֹ מַעְרִיב עֶרְבִים,

בְּחֻכְמָה פּוֹתֵחַ שְׁעָרִים,

וּבַתְבוּנָה מְשַׁנֶּה עֵתִים,

וּמַחְלִיף אֶת־הַזְּמַנִּים,

וּמְסַדֵּר אֶת־הַפּוֹכְבִּים בְּמִשְׁמְרוֹתֵיהֶם בְּרָקִיעַ כְּרִצּוֹנוֹ.

בוֹרֵא יוֹם וְלַיְלָה,

גּוֹלֵל אֹר מִפְּנֵי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְחֹשֶׁךְ מִפְּנֵי אֹר.

◀ וּמַעְבִּיר יוֹם וּמַבְיֵא לַיְלָה,

וּמַבְדִּיל בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה,

יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ.

אַל חֵי וְקַיָּם, תָּמִיד יִמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמַּעְרִיב עֶרְבִים.

We continue with the Second B'rakhah on page 40.

response is their indication that they are ready to follow the service leader and participate in the service.

WHOSE WISDOM OPENS THE GATES OF DAWN שְׁעָרִים פּוֹתֵחַ שְׁעָרִים. Some liturgical texts, such as this one, reflect ancient understandings of how the heavenly bodies operate—for instance, this depiction of the sun exiting the sky through gates in the west. Although contemporary science provides us with different understandings, we can still feel an underlying sense of wonder and awe as we too gaze at the setting sun and the star-filled sky. These liturgical images, then, become metaphors for our own understanding of the passage of time, reminding us of the uniqueness of each moment.

THE SH'MA AND ITS BLESSINGS קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע וּבְרָכוּתֶיהָ. Every evening service (Arvit) includes two climactic moments: the Sh'ma (page 41) and the Amidah (page 47). The Sh'ma, the affirmation of faith in the one God, has often been called Judaism's essential creed.

Two b'rakhot precede the Sh'ma: the first reflects on God's presence in the passage of time, while the second acknowledges God's love, represented by the gift of Torah, divine instruction as to how we should live. Two b'rakhot also follow the Sh'ma: the first acknowledges the exodus from Egypt, the signal event that has formed us as a people and set us on the path of freedom and responsibility; the second speaks to our concrete concerns for safety in the darkness of night. The Amidah, the silent personal prayer, then follows.

PRAISE בָּרַכּוּ. The formal synagogue evening service begins with the leader's call, signalling to the congregation that the moment of communal prayer has arrived. The congregation's

### Loving Humanity

Before reciting the Sh'ma, we may choose to think about how we need to prepare ourselves to make room for the listening that the Sh'ma demands.

Teach me, Lord, teach me how to deal with people to show them how to convert the evil within the good.

And if human beings are only wild animals, may I be able to turn them toward mildness and humility.

At the circus, I saw a man tame a tiger, defang a snake; would You make me so skilled?

Bless me with patience, make me strong as steel, that I might demonstrate to humanity the same such wonders.

—ABRAHAM REISEN

### To Love the World

When we act with love, Franz Rosenzweig remarks, “the neighbor represents all the world and thus distorts the eye’s view. Prayer, however, pleads for enlightenment and thereby, without overlooking the neighbor, sees beyond the neighbor, sees the whole world . . .”

### Second B'rakhah before the Sh'ma: Torah and God's Love

With timeless love, You have loved Your people, the house of Israel:

You have taught us Torah and mitzvot, statutes and laws.

Therefore, ADONAI our God, as we lie down and as we rise up, we shall speak of Your laws, rejoicing in the words of Your Torah and in Your mitzvot forever and ever.

For they are our life and the fullness of our days, and on them we shall meditate day and night.

► Do not ever withdraw Your love from us.

*Barukh atah ADONAI*, who loves the people Israel.

Ahavat olam beit yisrael am'kha ahavta,  
torah u-mitzvot, hukim u-mishpatim otanu limadta.  
Al ken Adonai eloheinu, b'shokhveinu u-v'kumeinu  
nasi-ah b'hukekha,  
v'nismaḥ b'divrei toratekha u-v'mitzvotekha l'olam va-ed.

Ki hem ḥayeinu v'orekh yameinu,  
u-vahem nehgeh yomam va-lailah.

► V'ahavat'kha al tasir mimenu l'olamim.

*Barukh atah Adonai, ohev amo yisrael.*

אַהַבַּת עוֹלָם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל  
עִמָּךְ אַהֲבָתָּה,  
תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת, חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים  
אוֹתָנוּ לְמַדְתָּ.  
עַל כֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ,  
בְּשִׂכְבְּנוּ וּבְקוּמֵנוּ  
נִשְׂחַח בְּחֻקֶיךָ  
וְנִשְׂמַח בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ  
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.  
כִּי הֵם חַיֵּינוּ  
וְאַרְךָ יָמֵינוּ,  
וּבְהֵם נִהְגֶּה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה,  
◀ וְאַהֲבָתְךָ אֵל תַּסִּיר מִמֶּנּוּ לְעוֹלָמִים.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אוֹהֵב עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

TORAH AND GOD'S LOVE. The second verse of the Sh'ma, which we are about to recite, speaks of our love of God: "You shall love Adonai your God. . . ." The ancient rabbis chose to precede that statement with a *b'rakhah* that emphasizes God's love for us. The rabbis understood love as the essential quality of the divine-human relationship, and they understood love to be primarily defined by behavior. God's love is expressed in giving the Torah, instruction on how to live; our love is expressed in the performance of mitzvot, our behavior in the world. In this way, the human and the Divine are bound together.

### AS WE LIE DOWN AND AS

### WE RISE UP, WE SHALL SPEAK OF YOUR LAWS

בְּשִׂכְבְּנוּ וּבְקוּמֵנוּ נִשְׂחַח בְּחֻקֶיךָ. This phrase anticipates the instruction in the Sh'ma to "speak of [these words] . . . when you lie down and when you rise up." This prayer expands the biblical command and speaks of the need to integrate Torah into our lives throughout the day.

כִּי הֵם חַיֵּינוּ. By living a life in accord with divine teaching (Torah), we elevate our days from mere existence to a life filled with meaning.

### Sh'ma: A Re-creation

Loving life and its mysterious source with all our heart and all our spirit, all our senses and strength, we take upon ourselves and into ourselves these promises: to care for the earth and those who live upon it, to pursue justice and peace, to love kindness and compassion. We will teach this to our children throughout the passage of the day—as we dwell in our homes and as we go on our journeys, from the time we rise until we fall asleep. And may our actions be faithful to our words that our children's children may live to know: Truth and kindness have embraced, peace and justice have kissed and are one.

—MARCIA FALK

### Love

Judaism commands love, for its goal is to teach human beings to love.

—ERIC L. FRIEDLAND

### You Shall Love

"You shall love Adonai your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all that is yours." You shall love—what a paradox this embraces! Can love then be commanded? . . . Yes of course, love cannot be commanded. No third party can command it or extort it. No third party can, but the One can. The commandment to love can only proceed from the mouth of the lover.

—FRANZ ROSENZWEIG

### Recitation of the Sh'ma

Some people may wish to pause here for a moment. Some may close their eyes; others may place a hand over their eyes. The intention is to concentrate on our relationship with God's oneness. In the absence of a minyan, we add the following: God is a faithful sovereign.

Hear, O Israel, ADONAI is our God, ADONAI is one.

Sh'ma yisrael, Adonai eloheinu, Adonai ehad.

Recited quietly: Praised be the name of the one whose glorious sovereignty is forever and ever.

You shall love ADONAI your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all that is yours.

These words that I command you this day shall be taken to heart.

Teach them again and again to your children; speak of them when you sit in your home, when you walk on your way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Bind them as a sign upon your hand and as a symbol above your eyes; inscribe them upon the doorposts of your home and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

V'ahavta et Adonai elohekha b'khol l'vav'kha u-v'khol nafsh'kha u-v'khol me'odekha. V'hayu ha-d'varim ha-eileh asher anokhi m'tzav'kha hayom al l'avvekha. V'shinantam l'vanekha v'dibarta bam, b'shivt'kha b'veitekha u-v'lekht'kha va-derekh u-v'shokhb'kha u-v'kumekha. U-k'shantam l'ot al yadekha v'hayu l'totafot bein einekha. U-kh'tavtam al mezuzot beitekha u-visharekha.

### קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע

Some people may wish to pause here for a moment. Some may close their eyes; others may place a hand over their eyes. The intention is to concentrate on our relationship with God's oneness. In the absence of a minyan, we add the following: אֵל מֶלֶךְ נְאֻמוֹ.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד.

ברוך שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלֻכּוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. Recited quietly:

וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ: וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם עַל-לִבְבְּךָ: וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָם בְּשַׁבְּתֶךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ: וְקִשַּׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל-יָדֶיךָ וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפוֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ: וְכָתַבְתָּם עַל-מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

דברים ו:ד-ט

words, the Sh'ma is recited twice daily, in both the evening and in the morning.

HEAR שְׁמַע. Seeing emphasizes the external; hearing, the internal. We are asked to internalize our experience of God. The point is emphasized by the custom of covering one's eyes during the recitation of the Sh'ma.

ONE אֶחָד. As an affirmation about God, the word ehad can be understood in multiple ways. This translation emphasizes the unity of God. Some translate ehad as "unique," emphasizing God's otherness and singularity. Still others translate it as "alone," emphasizing Judaism's monotheistic claim.

Mystic commentators expand the meaning of "one," interpreting it as describing the unity of heaven and earth, saying that we are ultimately all part of the One. In a similar vein, some rabbinic authorities recommended that when reciting the Sh'ma, one should meditate on all four directions, as well as above and below, in acknowledgment that God is everywhere (Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 13b).

PRaised BE THE NAME שֵׁם כְּבוֹד. According to the Mishnah, when God's name was pronounced by the High Priest on Yom Kippur, the people would respond, "Praised be the name . . ." (Yoma 3:8). Since this is a response but not part of the biblical text, it is normally not recited out loud, in order not to interrupt the flow of biblical verses—though the memory of how it was recited in the Temple remains with us in a whisper.

YOU SHALL LOVE וְאָהַבְתָּ. Repeatedly the Torah instructs us to love: to love God, to love our neighbor, and to love the stranger. We might well take the word "love" to imply an intense inner emotion, but the ancient rabbis frequently understood the biblical injunction to "love" in a more concrete and behavioral sense: love consists of acts of empathy, care, and kindness as well as behavior toward others that is just and righteous. To love God is certainly to recognize our conscious relationship to God. Equally, it may mean that we behave in ways that are pleasing to God—acting morally and fulfilling what God desires of us, to walk through life lovingly.

THE SH'MA. The Sh'ma comprises three paragraphs from the Torah, selected because they express basic Jewish beliefs and behaviors. According to the ancient rabbis, the first of the three paragraphs proclaims recognition of the sovereignty of heaven, עול מלכות שמים (ol malkhut shamayim); the second speaks to our behavior, עול מצוות (ol mitzvot); and the third reminds us of the Exodus, יציאת מצרים (y'tzi-at mitzrayim), our primary sacred story.

Because the first paragraph itself commands us to speak these words when we lie down and when we arise, and the second paragraph repeats these very

*"If You Will Hear": An Interpretive Translation*

If you faithfully obey My laws today, and love Me, I shall give you your livelihood in good time and in full measure. You shall work and reap the results of your labor, satisfied with what you have achieved. Be careful, however. Let not your heart be seduced, lured after false goals, seeking alien ideals, lest God's image depart from you and you sink, becoming desolate, and lose your joyous, God-given heritage.

—ANDRÉ UNGAR

*God's Anger*

The prophets never thought that God's anger is something that cannot be accounted for, unpredictable, irrational. It is never a spontaneous outburst, but a reaction occasioned by the conduct of man... Man's sense of injustice is a poor analogy to God's sense of injustice. The exploitation of the poor is to us a misdemeanor; to God, it is a disaster. Our reaction is disapproval; God's reaction is something no language can convey. Is it a sign of cruelty that God's anger is aroused when the rights of the poor are violated, when widows and orphans are oppressed? . . . There is an evil which most of us condone and are even guilty of: indifference to evil. We remain neutral, impartial, and not easily moved by the wrongs done unto other people. Indifference to evil is more insidious than evil itself.

—ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

*A Thread of Blue*

A thread of blue—blue like the sea, blue like the sky, blue like the color of the divine throne.

—SIFREI NUMBERS

If you will hear and obey the mitzvot that I command you this day, to love and serve ADONAI your God with all your heart and all your soul, then I will grant the rain for your land in season, rain in autumn and rain in spring. You shall gather in your grain and wine and oil; I will provide grass in your fields for your cattle and you shall eat and be satisfied. Take care lest your heart be tempted, and you stray and serve other gods and bow to them. Then ADONAI's anger will flare up against you, and God will close up the sky so that there will be no rain and the earth will not yield its produce. You will quickly disappear from the good land that ADONAI is giving you. Therefore, impress these words of mine upon your heart and upon your soul. Bind them as a sign upon your hand and as a symbol above your eyes; teach them to your children, by speaking of them when you sit in your home, when you walk on your way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. Inscribe them upon the doorposts of your home and on your gates. Then your days and the days of your children, on the land that ADONAI swore to your ancestors to give them, will be as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

Deuteronomy 11:13-21

ADONAI said to Moses: Speak to the people Israel, and instruct them that in every generation they shall put *tzitzit* on the corners of their garments, placing a thread of blue on the *tzitzit*, the fringe of each corner. That shall be your *tzitzit*; you shall look at it and remember all the mitzvot of ADONAI, and fulfill them, and not be seduced by your eyes and heart as they lead you astray. Then you will remember and fulfill all My mitzvot, and be holy before your God. I am ADONAI

your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. I am ADONAI your God—

Numbers 15:37-41

*Truly*

*When there is a minyan, the leader adds:*

▶ ADONAI your God—truly—

וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁמַעַתְּ אֶת-מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה אֹתְכֶם הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּלְעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל-לְבַבְכֶם וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁכֶם: וְנָתַתִּי מִטְרוֹ-אֲרָצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ יוֹרֵה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ וְאִסְפַּת דְּגַנְךָ וְתִירֹשֶׁךָ וְיִצְהַרְךָ: וְנָתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב בְּשָׂדֶךָ לְבַהֲמֹתֶךָ וְאִכְלֹתָ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ: הֲשִׁמְרוּ לָכֶם פְּרִיפְתָה לְבַבְכֶם וְסוֹרְתָם וְעַבְדֹתֶם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם: וְחָרָה אַף-יְהוָה בְּכֶם וְעָצַר אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה מָטָר וְהָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת-יְבוּלָהּ וְאִבְדֹתֶם מְהֵרָה מֵעַל-הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה נָתַן לָכֶם: וּשְׂמַתֶּם אֶת-דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹהֵי עַל-לְבַבְכֶם וְעַל-נַפְשְׁכֶם וּקְשַׁרְתֶּם אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל-יְדֵיכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפוֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם: וּלְמַדְתֶּם אֹתָם אֶת-בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ: וּכְתַבְתֶּם עַל-מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: לְמַעַן יִרְבוּ יְמֵיכֶם וְיָמֵי בְנֵיכֶם עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְתֵּיכֶם לֵאמֹר לָהֶם כִּימֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם עַל-הָאָרֶץ:

דברים יא:יג-כא

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל-כַּנְּפֵי בְגָדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם וְנָתַנּוּ עַל-צִיצִית הַכַּנֶּף פִּתִּיל תְּכֵלֶת: וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִית וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹת יְהוָה וְעָשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְלֹא תִתּוּרוּ אַחֲרַי לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרַי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-אַתֶּם זִנִּים אַחֲרֵיהֶם: לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וְעָשִׂיתֶם אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתַי וְהִייתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים לְאֱלֹהֵיכֶם: אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֹתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם לְהָיוֹת לָכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

במדבר טו:לו-מא

*אמת*

*When there is a minyan, the leader adds:*

◀ יהוה אלהיכם – אמת –

IF YOU WILL HEAR אִם שָׁמַעַתְּ. This description of reward and punishment has been a source of theological struggle for every Jewish generation, including those of the biblical era itself, and many Reform and some Reconstructionist congregations omit this paragraph. While our life experience often belies a belief in direct and immediate reward and punishment, in reciting this passage we may open ourselves to the suggestion that the consequences of our moral and immoral behavior resound in the world—though in ways that we may not grasp and that are beyond our comprehension. Jews, who have seen empires come and go, are witnesses to the inner decay wrought by corruption, injustice, and unbounded power.

ADONAI SAID TO MOSES וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה. The ancient rabbi emphasized that the last words of this paragraph, about remembering the exodus from Egypt, are the prime reason for its inclusion in the Sh'ma. In Jewish theology, the exodus anticipates the redemption in the future: true freedom. The means of achieving redemption, we are taught here, is remembering our responsibility to live lives that are holy.

*NOT BE SEDUCED BY YOUR EYES AND HEART*

וְלֹא תִתּוּרוּ וְאַחֲרַי לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרַי עֵינֵיכֶם. The sages comment that it is the heart that directs the eyes. What we see depends on our perspective, our point of view.

BE HOLY וְהִייתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים. This is the essence of the Torah: to lead a holy life.

## Mitzrayim

*Mitzrayim* [Egypt] is derived from the word meaning “strait,” referring to the narrow strips of fertile land along the Nile, hemmed in by the desert. When we speak today about “coming out of Egypt” or the liberation we are to seek on Pesah, those “straits” are usually reapplied to our own spiritual situation. What is it that is closing us in? In what places in our lives are we too tight, too constricted, unable to see or experience life broadly and open-handedly? Our *Mitzrayim* is an “Egypt” of the mind or soul from which we need to make the long trek to freedom.

*Mitzrayim* also means the place of oppression. Jews far from Egypt lived in *Mitzrayim* for many centuries, whether it was called Spain, Germany, Morocco, or Russia. As the tale of Exodus has become the property of all humanity, we see that such “Egyptian” bondage exists everywhere, including our own country. We just-liberated slaves are supposed to know what to do when we see it. Even when we are on the other side of the master-slave relationship, we cannot be blind to the familiar reality.

—ARTHUR GREEN

An alternate version of this b'rakhah may be found on page 43b.

## First B'rakhah after the Sh'ma

This is our enduring affirmation, binding on us: that ADONAI is our God and there is none other, and we, Israel, are God's people.

God is our sovereign, redeeming us from earthly rulers, delivering us from the hand of all tyrants, bringing judgment upon our oppressors and just retribution upon all our mortal enemies, performing wonders beyond understanding and marvels beyond all reckoning.

God places us among the living, not allowing our steps to falter, and leads us past the false altars of our enemies, exalting us above all those who hate us.

ADONAI avenged us with miracles before Pharaoh, offered signs and wonders in the land of Egypt.

God [some omit on Shabbat: smote, in anger, all of Egypt's firstborn,] brought Israel from its midst to lasting freedom, and led them through the divided water of the Sea of Reeds.

As their pursuers and enemies drowned in the depths, God's children beheld the power of the Divine; they praised and acknowledged God's name,

Ha-ma-avir banav bein gizrei yam suf,  
et rodfeihem v'et soneihem bi-t'homot tiba.  
V'ra-u vanav g'vurato, shibhu v'hodu lishmo,

We continue on page 44.

An alternate version of this b'rakhah may be found on page 43b.

וְאָמוּנָה כָּל־זֹאת, וְקִיָּם עָלֵינוּ,  
כִּי הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵין זֹלָתוֹ,  
וְאִנְחָנוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ.  
הַפּוֹדְנוּ מִיַּד מְלָכִים,  
מִלְכָּנוּ הַגּוֹאֲלָנוּ מִכַּף כָּל־הָעֲרִיצִים.  
הָאֵל הַנִּפְרָע לָנוּ מִצָּרֵינוּ,  
וְהַמְשַׁלֵּם גָּמוּל לְכָל־אוֹיְבֵי נַפְשֵׁנוּ,  
הָעֹשֶׂה גְדוּלוֹת עַד אֵין חֶקֶר,  
וְנִפְלְאוֹת עַד אֵין מִסְפָּר.  
הַשֵּׁם נִפְשָׁנוּ בַחַיִּים,  
וְלֹא נָתַן לְמוֹט רַגְלָנוּ.  
הַמְדַרְכֵּנוּ עַל בְּמוֹת אוֹיְבֵינוּ,  
וְיָרֵם קִרְנָנוּ עַל כָּל־שׂוֹנְאֵינוּ.  
הָעֹשֶׂה לָנוּ נְסִים וּנְקָמָה בַּפְּרָעָה,  
אוֹתוֹת וּמוֹפְתִים בְּאֶדְמַת בְּנֵי חָם.  
[some omit on Shabbat: הַמְכַּה בְּעִבְרָתוֹ כָּל־בְּכוֹרֵי מִצְרַיִם,  
וַיּוֹצֵא אֶת־עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם לְחֵרוֹת עוֹלָם.  
הַמַּעֲבִיר בְּנֵיו בֵּין גִּזְרֵי יָם סוּף,  
אֶת־רוּדְפֵיהֶם וְאֶת־שׂוֹנְאֵיהֶם בְּתַהוֹמוֹת טַבַּע.  
וְרָאוּ בְנֵיו גְּבוּרָתוֹ,  
שִׁבְּחוּ וְהוֹדוּ לְשִׁמּוֹ,

We continue on page 44.

**THIS IS OUR ENDURING AFFIRMATION** וְאָמוּנָה. So closely was the Sh'ma linked with this b'rakhah, the blessing of redemption, that the rabbis insisted that its first word—"truly"—be recited along with the very last words of the Sh'ma, so the leader reads them together upon completion of the Sh'ma: *Adonai eloheikhem emet*. Thus we affirm that God is true, or truth itself.

**GOD SMOTE** הַמְכָה. As the biblical account of the exodus from Egypt exemplifies, it is an unfortunate reality that sometimes freedom from oppression is only attained through violence. While we nevertheless celebrate the liberation from oppression, the very violence of the process is a reminder that the world is still in need of healing, and that the redemption we celebrate is yet incomplete. Since Shabbat is a vision of a world at peace, some omit this phrase on Shabbat and reserve it only for the weekday liturgy.

► willingly accepting God's sovereignty.  
Then Moses, Miriam, and the people Israel joyfully sang to You:

► U-malkhuto b'ratzon kiblu aleihem, moshe u-miryam u-v'nei yisrael l'kha anu shirah, b'simḥah rabah, v'amru khulam:

"Who is like You, ADONAI, among the mighty!  
Who is like You, adorned in holiness,  
revered in praise, working wonders!"

Mi khamokha ba-eilim Adonai, mi kamokha nedar bakodesh, nora t'hilot, oseh feleh.

Your children recognized Your sovereignty, as You split the sea before Moses. "This is my God," they responded, and said:

"ADONAI will reign forever and ever."

Malkhut'kha ra'u vanekha, bokei-a yam lifnei moshe, zeh eili anu v'amru: Adonai yimlokh l'olam va-ed.

► And so it is written: "ADONAI has rescued Jacob and redeemed him from the hand of those more powerful than he."

*Barukh atah ADONAI*, who redeemed the people Israel.

◀ וּמַלְכוּתוֹ בְּרָצוֹן קִבְּלוּ עֲלֵיהֶם,  
מֹשֶׁה וּמִרְיָם וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְךָ עָנּוּ שִׁירָה  
בְּשִׂמְחָה רַבָּה, וְאָמְרוּ כְּלָם:

מִי כְמוֹכָה בְּאֵלִים יְהוָה,  
מִי כְמוֹכָה נְאֻדָּר בְּקֹדֶשׁ,  
נוֹרָא תְהִלָּת, עֹשֶׂה פִלְא.

מַלְכוּתְךָ רָאוּ בְנֵיךָ, בּוֹקֵעַ יָם לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה,  
זֶה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאָמְרוּ:

יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד.

◀ וְנֹאמְרָ: כִּי פָדָה יְהוָה אֶת־יַעֲקֹב,  
וּבְגָאֹל מִיַּד חֲזָק מִמֶּנּוּ.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, גֹּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

עָנּוּ וְאָמְרוּ JOYFULLY SANG. Literally, "they responded and said." Basing himself on the 1st-century report of Philo of Alexandria, the modern scholar Reuven Kimelman argues that the verb *anu*, "responded," refers to the antiphonal male and female choruses in the ancient synagogue. Thus, the men would say *Adonai yimlokh*, "Adonai will reign"; the women would respond: *l'olam va-ed*, "forever and ever."

MIRIAM מְרִיָּם. The Torah tells us that after the deliverance at the Sea, Moses led the men in song; Miriam, in response, led the women in joyous singing.

WHO IS LIKE YOU מִי כְמוֹכָה יְהוָה. Exodus 15:11.

ADONAI WILL REIGN יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ. Exodus 15:18.

ADONAI HAS RESCUED כִּי פָדָה יְהוָה. Jeremiah 31:11.

REDEEMED גֹּאֵל. The verb is in the past tense, unlike all the other *b'rakhot* of the Sh'ma, which are in the present tense. It is as if a community that truly is able to recite the Sh'ma together must already have been redeemed. (based on Franz Rosenzweig)

### Shelter Me in a Leaf

Shelter me in a leaf,  
Shelter me in a stone,  
I envy them their sure peace.  
Shelter me, God,  
Protect and conceal me.  
Enclose me in your fences.

Pick me up from the dust  
That turns me gray.  
Embrace me with your  
eternity

Like a leaf and a stone  
Nourished with dew.

Make me a path of  
permanence,  
My heart is shadowed.  
Anoint me with your dazzle  
Which I feel in my breath.

Wash away my trembling.  
Wash away doubt.  
The nights are ephemeral,  
The days, filled with pain. . . .  
Send Your help, God . . .

—KADYA MOLODOWSKY  
(translated by  
Kathryn Hellerstein)

### The Canopy of Peace, the Sukkah of Peace

Peace comes to us in the recognition that when we allow ourselves to be vulnerable, when we recognize that we cannot control everything, redemption can be achieved. The central image in this prayer is the “*sukkah* of peace.” The *sukkah* is a fragile structure, open to the elements. Peace is pictured not as a temple, solidly built, gilded, perhaps ornate, but rather as created out of the most fragmentary of materials, leaving us vulnerable and at risk.

### Second B'rakhah after the Sh'ma: Peace in the Night

Allow us, ADONAI our God, to sleep peacefully;  
awaken us to life, O sovereign.  
Spread over us Your canopy of peace,  
restore us with Your good counsel,  
and save us for the sake of Your name.  
Shield us.

#### Some omit on Shabbat:

Remove from us enemies, pestilence, sword, starvation,  
and sorrow; remove the evil forces that surround us.

Shelter us in the shadow of Your wings,  
for You, God, watch over and deliver us,  
and You, God, are sovereign, merciful, and compassionate.

► Ensure our going and coming for life and peace,  
now and forever.

May You spread over us Your canopy of peace.

*Barukh atah ADONAI*, who spreads the canopy of peace  
over us, over all the people Israel, and over Jerusalem.

Hashkiveinu Adonai eloheinu l'shalom,  
v'ha-amideinu malkeinu l'hayim.  
U-fros aleinu sukkat sh'lomekha,  
v'takneinu b'eitzah tovah milfanekha,  
v'hoshi-einu l'ma-an sh'mekha.  
V'hagein ba-adeinu,

#### Some omit on Shabbat:

v'haseir mei-aleinu oyev, dever, v'herev, v'ra-av, v'yagon,  
v'haseir satan mi-l'faneinu u-mei-ahareinu,  
u-v'tzeil k'nafekha tastireinu,  
ki El shomreinu u-matzileinu atah,  
ki El melekh hanun v'rahum atah,  
► u-sh'mor tzeiteinu u-vo-einu l'hayim u-l'shalom,  
mei-atah v'ad olam.  
U-fros aleinu sukkat sh'lomekha.  
*Barukh atah Adonai*, ha-poreis sukkat shalom aleinu  
v'al kol amo yisrael, v'al yerushalayim.

הַשְּׂפִיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְשָׁלוֹם,  
וְהַעֲמִידֵנוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ לְחַיִּים,  
וּפְרוֹשׂ עָלֵינוּ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמְךָ,  
וְתַקַּנְנוּ בְּעֵצָה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ,  
וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ.  
וְהַגֵּן בְּעַדְנוּ,

#### Some omit on Shabbat:

וְהַסֵּר מֵעָלֵינוּ אוֹיֵב, דָּבָר, וְחָרֵב, וְרָעַב, וְיָגוֹן,  
וְהַסֵּר שָׂטָן מִלְּפָנֵינוּ וּמֵאַחֲרֵינוּ.

וּבְצִל כַּנְּפֵיךָ תִּסְתֵּרֵנוּ,  
כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמְרֵנוּ וּמַצִּילֵנוּ אַתָּה,  
כִּי אֵל מְלֶךְ חַנוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה,  
◀ וְשׁוֹמֵר צְאֲתָנוּ וּבוֹאֵנוּ, לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם,  
מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.  
וּפְרוֹשׂ עָלֵינוּ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמְךָ.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַפּוֹרֵשׂ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ  
וְעַל כָּל-עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם.

ALLOW US . . . TO SLEEP  
הַשְּׂפִיבֵנוּ. Nighttime may  
provoke fear: What may  
happen to us when we are  
asleep? Will we wake up?  
Each phrase in the opening  
of this prayer begins not  
with a noun as a subject,  
but rather with a verb,  
creating a powerful drama  
of motion and movement,  
an expression of the will  
to live.

וְהַסֵּר מֵעָלֵינוּ  
REMOVE FROM US  
רִיטֵס. Some Sephardic  
rites follow the custom  
of changing the weekday  
liturgy to accord with the  
spirit of Shabbat. Accord-  
ingly they remove the line  
“Remove from us enemies,  
pestilence, sword, starva-  
tion...”—not wanting to  
even mention on Shabbat  
sources of evil that might  
direct our attention away  
from the peacefulness that  
Shabbat accords. Ashke-  
nazic authorities, however,  
feared that if the liturgy

changed on Shabbat, congregants would be confused as to the proper language of this blessing and would cease to include the passage on weekdays. In a society that depended on memorization, this may have been a reasonable fear.

EVIL FORCES שָׂטָן. Literally “Satan.” In the Bible, this term is generally used to refer either to evil impulses or to a celestial adversary, but never to a fallen angel.

YOUR CANOPY OF PEACE סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמְךָ. The weekday version of this *b'rakhah* ends with the words *shomer amo yisrael la-ad*, “eternal guardian of Your people Israel.” Medieval commentators quote the Talmud of the Land of Israel to the effect that Shabbat itself guards the people Israel, and so the prayer is changed on Shabbat. (Oddly, however, the extant versions of the Talmud of the Land of Israel do not contain this passage.)

The phrase *sukkat shalom*, “canopy (*sukkah*) of peace,” is seemingly original to this prayer. It is not found in the Bible but may allude to Amos 9:11, where the prophet sees the rebuilding of the fallen *sukkah* of David as an image of redemption; or to Psalm 27:5, where the poet prays to be hidden in God's *sukkah*, protected from enemies, while gazing peacefully at God's countenance.

JERUSALEM יְרוּשָׁלַיִם. In Jewish thought, the peace of Jerusalem symbolizes univer-  
sal peace.

## Vayinafash

Do not read *shavat* as a verb, but as the subject: the day of Shabbat. And do not construe the verb *vayinafash* as “rested,” but rather as “refreshing souls.” Thus, the phrase may be read as: “Shabbat refreshes all souls.” What is Shabbat compared to? It is like a fountain in the midst of a garden: when the fountain flows, the entire garden flourishes.

—SEFER HABAHIR

## N'shamah Y'teirah

Our tradition speaks of a very interesting phenomenon concerning Shabbat. During the week everyone has a *n'shamah*, a soul. But on Shabbat we receive a *n'shamah y'teirah*, an “additional soul.” This suggests that there is some kind of undeveloped facet of personality, a spiritual dimension, of which we remain unaware in the normal course of events. On Shabbat we are given the time to enrich ourselves by developing or creating this extra spiritual dimension.

—PINCHAS PELI

## Biblical Sanctification of the Day

We recite the following biblical passages while standing.

### On Shabbat:

The people Israel shall observe Shabbat, maintaining it as an everlasting covenant throughout all generations. It is a sign between Me and the people Israel for all time, that in six days ADONAI made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day, ceased from work and rested.

V'shamru v'nei yisrael et ha-shabbat,  
la-asot et ha-shabbat l'dorotam b'rit olam.  
Beini u-vein b'nei yisrael ot hi l'olam,  
ki sheishet yamim asah Adonai et ha-shamayim v'et ha-aretz,  
u-vayom ha-sh'vi-i shavat vayinafash.

### On Festivals:

Thus Moses proclaimed the festivals of ADONAI to the people Israel.

## Hatzi Kaddish

### Leader:

May God's great name be exalted and hallowed throughout the created world, as is God's wish. May God's sovereignty soon be established, in your lifetime and in your days, and in the days of all the house of Israel. And we say: *Amen*.

### Congregation and Leader:

May God's great name be acknowledged forever and ever!  
Y'hei sh'meih raba m'varakh l'alam u-l'almei almaya.

### Leader:

May the name of the Holy One be acknowledged and celebrated, lauded and worshipped, exalted and honored, extolled and acclaimed—though God, who is blessed, *b'rikh hu*, is truly [on Shabbat Shuvah we add: far] beyond all acknowledgment and praise, or any expressions of gratitude or consolation ever spoken in the world. And we say: *Amen*.

On Shabbat, we continue with the Amidah on the next page.  
On Festivals, we continue with the Amidah on page 306.

We recite the following biblical passages while standing.

### On Shabbat:

וְשָׁמְרוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת,  
לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת לְדֹרֹתָם בְּרִית עוֹלָם.  
בֵּינִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹת הִיא לְעוֹלָם,  
כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ,  
וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת וַיִּנְפֹּשׁ.

### On Festivals:

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶת־מוֹעֲדֵי יְהוָה, אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

## חֲצִי קַדִּישׁ

### Leader:

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא,  
בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא, כְּרַעוּתָהּ,  
וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּינוּ וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ  
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,  
בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאַמְרוּ אַמֵּן.

### Congregation and Leader:

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמֵיָא.

### Leader:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא  
וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא,  
לְעָלְמָא מִן כָּל־ [לְעָלְמָא לְעָלְמָא מְכַל־  
[on Shabbat Shuvah we substitute: בְּרִיךְ הוּא,]  
בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא וְשִׁבְחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא דְאַמִּירָן בְּעֵלְמָא,  
וְאַמְרוּ אַמֵּן.

On Shabbat, we continue with the Amidah on the next page.  
On Festivals, we continue with the Amidah on page 306.

THE PEOPLE ISRAEL SHALL  
OBSERVE בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
Exodus 31:16–17.

THUS MOSES PROCLAIMED  
וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה  
Leviticus 23:44.

AND RESTED וַיִּנְפֹּשׁ. Or:  
“was refreshed.” The basic  
root meaning of this verb is  
“to breathe”; it is related to  
the noun *nefesh*, meaning  
“person” (i.e., the species in  
whom God has blown the  
breath of life). When one  
rests, one infuses oneself  
with a new breath of life.  
The peculiarity of the  
phrasing of this verse gave  
birth to the idea of the  
*n'shamah y'teirah*, the “ad-  
ditional soul” granted us on  
Shabbat. (Reuven Hammer,  
adapted)

HATZI KADDISH. As re-  
marked upon earlier, the  
evening service consists of  
two central moments: the  
recitation of the Sh'ma,  
and the Amidah (the silent  
personal prayer). The Hatzi  
Kaddish separates the two  
sections. Its central line,  
*y'hei sh'meih raba m'varakh*,  
“May God's great name be  
acknowledged,” expresses  
the same thought as the  
call to worship, *Bar'khu*,  
with which the evening  
service began. It is as if the  
leader is calling us to a new  
service of personal prayer  
that begins here.