

---

נעילה

# neilah

---



---

days of awe / concluding service

---

Copyright © 2003

Interfaith Community, Inc. New York, NY

---

## MEDITATION

As we sit here in meditation and prayer, the last lingering grains of sand filter through the hourglass of this holy day. The dusk draws ever closer; the relentless hand of time hangs poised, about to mark the end of *Yom Kippur*.

In the entire Jewish year, there is no moment more solemn than this one. All through the day the flood of prayer has ebbed and flowed. Now, as the sun sinks low, as the shadows of night draw near, we feel a new pitch of intensity.

“Open for us the gate—  
At the hour of the closing of the gate.”

The word “*Neilah*,” the name of the service that is about to begin, means the “locking of a gate.” In ancient days, as long as the sun shone, the gates of the Temple were kept open. All could enter. But at nightfall, the gates were locked. From then on, no one could enter or leave. Later, the word “*Neilah*” was applied to the last service of *Yom Kippur*. For in this day, the Jew saw a spiritual gate, an entranceway to a new relationship with God, and opportunity to change, to begin again.

In our lives, many gates open before us and close behind us. Each year has been such a gate; and, as the years have come and gone, gates have opened and shut. No power or prayer can reopen a gate that has swung shut. It is sealed forever.

But a new gate has just opened before us. It beckons to us with wondrous gifts. It offers us minutes, hours, days. How will we use these precious gifts?

In this *Neilah* hour, let us resolve to enter the gates to truth and justice, the gates to kindness and compassion, to love and forgiveness; let us seek those things that abide forever. Let us use well the opportunities that now beckon...before the gate swings shut.

adapted from “Before the Closing of the Gates”  
Milton Steinberg

*(The Ark is opened; the congregation rises.)*

We pray together:

*Grant us peace, your most precious gift, O Eternal Source of peace, and give us the will to proclaim its message to all the peoples of the earth. Bless our country, that it may always be a stronghold of peace, and its advocate among the nations. May contentment reign within its borders, health and happiness within its homes. Strengthen the bonds of friendship among the inhabitants of all lands. May the love of your name hallow every home and every heart. Teach us, O God, to labor for righteousness, and seal us in the Book of life, blessing, and peace. Blessed is the Eternal God, the Source of peace.*

We pray responsively:

*The sun sinks low, the shadows fall,  
The day of God is near its end.  
To you, eternal Sovereign of all,  
Let all our prayers now ascend.  
O hear them, Lord, before the night;  
In the evening, let there be light.*

Bestow your favor and your grace,  
And pardon us, O Ruler of heaven.  
The day declines—yet still a space  
To us for penitence is given.  
Then shall our sins be put to flight.  
In the evening, let there be light.

*And when the end of life draws near,  
And darkness threatens to enfold us.  
We shall not be dismayed by fear,  
Our trust in you will still uphold us.  
With you, eternity is bright:  
In the evening, there shall be light.*

Forgive your neighbors the wrongs they have done you, and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven.  
If I nurse anger against another,  
can I ask pardon of Adonai?  
Showing no pity for one like myself,  
can I then plead for my own sins?  
If I, a creature of flesh, nourish resentment,  
who will forgive me my sin?

*Consider that life is short, and cease to hate.  
Remember mortality and death,  
and live by the commandments.*

Let not the fierce sun dry one tear of pain, before you yourself have wiped it from the sufferer's eye. But let each burning human tear drop onto your heart and there remain; nor ever brush it off until the pain that caused it is removed.

*For transgressions against God, the Day of Atonement atones, but for transgressions of one human being against another, the Day of Atonement does not atone until they have made peace with one another.*



#### READER'S KADDISH

The *Kaddish*, is an ancient prayer with similarities to the Lord's Prayer, and there has been speculation about whether one was derived from the other. Variations on the *Kaddish* are recited many times in traditional services. The "Mourners' *Kaddish*" is said by mourners to commemorate loved ones who have died. Now we say the "Reader's *Kaddish*" together.

יִתְגַּדַּל וַיִּתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא  
בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי־בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ,  
וַיְמַלִּיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוֹן  
וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי  
דְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,  
בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב,  
וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְכַרְךְ  
לְעֵלַם וּלְעֵלְמֵי עֵלְמַיָּא.  
יִתְבָּרַךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח,  
וַיִּתְפָּאֵר וַיִּתְרוֹמֵם וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא,  
וַיִּתְהַדָּר וַיִּתְעַלֶּה וַיִּתְהַלַּל  
שְׁמֵהּ דְקוּדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא,  
לְעֵלָא מִן כָּל־בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא,  
תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא  
דְאָמִירוֹן בְּעֵלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

*Yit-ga-dal ve-yit-ka-dash she-mei ra-ba  
be-al-ma di-ver-a chi-re-u-tei,  
ve-yam-lich mal-chu-tei be-cha-yei-chon  
u-ve-yo-mei-chon u-ve-cha-yei  
de-chol beit Yis-ra-eil,  
be-a-ga-la u-vi-ze-man ka-riv,  
ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.*

*Ye-hei she-mei ra-ba me-va-rach  
le-a-lam u-le-al-mei al-ma-ya.*

*Yit-ba-rach ve-yish-ta-bach,  
ve-yit-pa-ar ve-yit-ro-mam ve-yit-na-sei,  
ve-yit-ha-dar ve-yit-a-leh ve-yit-ha-lal  
she-mei de-ku-de-sha, be-rich hu,  
le-ei-la min kol bi-re-cha-ta ve-shi-ra-ta  
tush-be-cha-ta ve-neh-cheh-ma-ta  
da-a-mi-ran be-al-ma, ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.*

◆◆◆ ◆◆◆

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

The *Kadosh* is an ancient prayer, proclaiming the holiness of God, In its rhythm and its meaning, it inspires us to reach for the Divine spirit and what is holy in each of us.

We sanctify God's name on earth, even as all things, to the ends of time and space, proclaim your holiness, and in the words of the prophet we chant the *Kadosh*:

קְדוֹשׁ, קְדוֹשׁ, קְדוֹשׁ  
יְיָ צְבָאוֹת,  
מְלֵא כָּל-הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ.

*Ka-dosh, Ka-dosh, Ka-dosh*  
*Adonai tse-va-ot,*  
*me-lo chol ha-a-rets ke-vo-do*

*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the fullness of the whole earth is God's glory!*

Source of our strength, sovereign Ruler, how majestic is your presence in all the earth!

*Blessed is the glory of God in heaven and earth.*

Blessed is the divine spirit we strive to encompass in our lives. Wondrous is its emanating presence which entwines us with one another, with past and with future, and which ennobles us all.

◆◆◆ ◆◆◆

CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

AL CHEIT

עַל חַטָּא

*For the sin we have committed against You under duress or by choice,*

*the sin we have committed against You consciously or unconsciously*

*and the sin we have committed against You openly or secretly,*

*the sin we have committed against You in our thoughts.*

*the sin we have committed against You by the abuse of power.*

*For all these, O God of mercy, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement!*

*(All chant)*

*Ve-al ku-lam Eh-lo-a s'li-chot s'lach la-nu me-chal la-nu ka-pehr la-nu*

*The sin we have committed against You by the hardening of our hearts,*

*the sin we have committed against You by profaning Your name,*

*and the sin we have committed against You by disrespect for parents and teachers*

*the sin we have committed against You by dishonesty in our work,*

*and the sin we have committed against You by hurting others in any way.*

*For all these, O God of mercy, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement!*

*Ve-al ku-lam Eh-lo-a s'li-chot s'lach la-nu me-chal la-nu ka-pehr la-nu*

◆◆◆ ◆◆◆



AVINU MALKEINU

We say for third and final time of these Days of Awe the special prayer for forgiveness: the *Avinu Malkeinu* .

*Avinu Malkeinu, we have sinned before thee.*

*Avinu Malkeinu, have mercy upon us and upon our children.*

*Avinu Malkeinu, keep far from our country pestilence, war, and famine.*

*Avinu Malkeinu, cause all hate and oppression to vanish from the earth.*

*Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us for blessing in the book of life.*

*Avinu Malkeinu , grant unto us a year of happiness.*

*AvinuMalkeinu, help us to exalt your name in the world.*

*Avinu Malkeinu, in your mercy, accept our prayer.*

*Avinu Malkeinu, be gracious and answer us for we have little merit. Treat us generously and with kindness, and be our help.*

*(All ing)*

*A-vi-nu mal-kei-nu, cha-nei-nu va-a-nei-nu, ki-ein ba-nu ma-a-sim. A-sei i-ma-nu tse-da-kah va-cheh-sed. A-sei, i-ma-nu tse-da-kah va-cheh-sed, ve-ho-shi-ei-nu. A-sei i-ma-nu tse-da-kah va-cheh-sed. A-sei , i-ma-nu tse-da-kah va-cheh-sed, ve-ho-shi-ei-nu.*

*Open the gates for us, even now, even now, when the gates are closing, and the day begins to fade. Oh, the day is fading, the sun is setting; let us enter your gates!*

*The day is fading, the sun is setting, the silence and peace of night descend upon the earth. Give rest now, O Author of peace, to our troubled hearts; lift up the spirit oppressed by guilt. Turn, O Loved One, to your children, turn to every broken heart and every burdened soul. Let us at this hour be sure of your forgiveness.*

◇◇◇ ◇◇◇

## CONCLUSION

We now recite the watchword of our faith, the *Shema*

*She-ma Yis-ra-eil: A do nai eh-lo-hei-nu, A do nai eh chad!*

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

☆☆☆ ☆☆☆

The *Shofar* is sounded to mark the close of Yom Kippur and the Days of Awe. On *Rosh Hashanah* we heard a series of distinctive *Shofar* blasts, which we can understand as reflecting the process of atonement: the full, whole sound of *tekiah*; the broken sound of *shevarim*; the shattered sound of *teruah*. Now that we have gone deep into our souls, reflected and repented, we are whole again; and we hear the full, unbroken sound of *tekiah* extended to a great whole blast: the *tekiah godolah*.

May we each be sealed in the Book of Life.

*Tekiah godolah!*                      shofar

*(The Ark is closed.)*

**LE SHANA TOVA TIKATEIVU !**

MAY YOU BE INSCRIBED AND SEALED FOR A GOOD YEAR!