
GATES OF FORGIVENESS

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

SELICHOT

Have regard to our suffering and not to our shortcomings,
Cleanse us who cry out to You, Wondrous God.

O hear our song and our prayer.

רְצֵה עֲתִירָתָם בְּעֶמְדָם בַּלֵּילוֹת,
שְׁעֵה בְּרָצוֹן בְּקֶרְבֵּן כְּלִיל וְעוֹלוֹת,
תִּרְאֵם נִסְיָה, עוֹשֶׂה גְדוּלוֹת,
לִשְׁמַע אֶל הַרְנָה וְאֶל הַתְּפִלָּה.

Be our offering this night acceptable as sacrifice of old.
Maker of miracles, make us to see the miracle of forgive-
ness.

O hear our song and our prayer.



TURNING: THE CALL

Now is the time for turning. The leaves are beginning to turn from green to red and orange. The birds are beginning to turn and are heading once more toward the South. The animals are beginning to turn to storing their food for the winter. For leaves, birds, and animals turning comes instinctively. But for us turning does not come so easily. It takes an act of will for us to make a turn. It means breaking with old habits. It means admitting that we have been wrong; and this is never easy. It means losing face; it means starting all over again; and this is always painful. It means saying: I am sorry. It means recognizing that we have the ability to change. These things are terribly hard to do. But unless we turn, we will be trapped forever in yesterday's ways. Lord, help us to turn—from callousness

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to sensitivity, from hostility to love, from pettiness to purpose, from envy to contentment, from carelessness to discipline, from fear to faith. Turn us around, O Lord, and bring us back toward You. Revive our lives, as at the beginning. And turn us toward each other, Lord, for in isolation there is no life.



Ha·shi·vei·nu A·do·nai ei·le·cha,
ve·na·shu·vah.
cha·deish ya·mei·nu ke·ke·dem.

הַשִּׁיבֵנו יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיךָ,
וְנָשׁוּבָה.
חַדֵּשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֵדָם.

Help us to return to You, O Lord; then truly shall we return.
Renew our days as in the past.



Eternal God, what can we say in Your presence? How account for our sins? We speak of repentance, and yet are slow to change. But now we turn to You with the prayer that Your love may abide with us always, turning our hearts to Your ways, our feet to Your paths. Hope is food and drink to us; hope sustains us. And so we pray: Do not turn us away empty-handed from Your presence. End our darkness with Your light and turn our passions to Your purpose. Help us, Lord, in this hour of turning, to make real in our lives the words of our mouths, the meditations of our hearts.

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The Wilderness of Sin. And then a word
Unspeakable, a stillness, and a standing stone
Set in the road; you would not raise a chisel
Upon that stone. Nothing but sky and sand
To purify a forbidden generation
Of Egypt's kitchens. In that wilderness
I've wandered for my forty years also,
Lifting mirages to break horizons, dreaming
Idolatries to alphabet the void,
Sending these postcards to the self at home:
Sunlight on pouring water; wish I were here.



Something is very gently,
invisibly, silently,
pulling at me—a thread
or net of threads
finer than cobweb and as
elastic. I haven't tried
the strength of it. No barbed hook
pierced and tore me. Was it
not long ago this thread
began to draw me? Or
way back? Was I
born with its knot about my
neck, a bridle? Not fear
but a stirring
of wonder makes me
catch my breath when I feel
the tug of it when I thought
it had loosened itself and gone.



The leaves fall, fall as from afar . . .
 They fall with slow and lingering descent.
 And in the nights the heavy earth, too, falls,
 From out the stars into the Solitude.
 Thus all must fall. This hand of mine must fall,
 And lo! the other one:—it is the law.
 But there is One who holds this falling
 infinitely softly in His hands.



THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND THE GOD OF ISRAEL

Who has plumbed the mind of the Lord,
 who can instruct the Ancient of Days?
 What likeness can you find for God,
 what form resembles Me?
 Why declare, O Israel,
 'My way is hid from the Lord,
 my cause is ignored by my God?'
 Do you not know?
 Have you not heard?
 I, the Lord, am God from of old,
 Creator of the earth from end to end;
 I never grow faint or weary,
 My wisdom cannot be fathomed.
 I give strength to the faint,
 fresh vigor to the spent.
 Turn to Me and be saved,
 all the ends of the earth!

*The Lord is our chosen portion,
 our cup of salvation;
 our lines have fallen for us in pleasant places,
 and our heritage is truly good.*



As clay takes form
in a potter's hand,
so do we in Yours.

*Mold us into human form.
You are the potter;
we are but clay.*

As words are shaped
by a poet's hand,
so are we by Yours.

*Make us Your song.
You are the singer,
we are Your work.*

As a ship takes its course
from a sailor's hand,
so do we from Yours.

*Set us on Your chosen course.
You are the sailor;
we are Your ship.*

As threads are patterned
by a weaver's hand,
so are we by Yours.

*Weave us into Your plan, O God.
We are Your people;
You are our King!*



We are Your people,	כִּי אָנוּ עַמֶּךָ
You are our King.	וְאַתָּה מַלְכֵנוּ.
We are Your children,	אָנוּ בְנֶיךָ
You are our Father.	וְאַתָּה אָבִינוּ.
We are Your possession,	אָנוּ נַחְלָתְךָ
You are our Portion.	וְאַתָּה גּוֹרְלֵנוּ.
We are Your flock,	אָנוּ צֹאנֶךָ
You are our Shepherd.	וְאַתָּה רוֹעֵנוּ.
We are Your vineyard,	אָנוּ כַּרְמֶךָ
You are our Keeper.	וְאַתָּה נוֹטְרָנוּ.
We are Your beloved,	אָנוּ רְעִיתְךָ
You are our Friend.	וְאַתָּה דוֹדֵנוּ.



THE DIVINE COMPASSION

אֵל מֶלֶךְ, יוֹשֵׁב עַל כִּסֵּא רַחֲמִים, מְתַנְהֵג בְּחַסִּידוֹת,
 מוֹחֵל עֲוֹנוֹת עַמּוֹ, מְעַבִּיר רֵאשׁוֹן רֵאשׁוֹן, מְרַבֵּה
 מְחִילָה לְחַטָּאִים, וְסֹלִיחָה לְפוֹשְׁעִים. עוֹשֶׂה צְדָקוֹת
 עִם כָּל בֶּשֶׂר וְרוּחַ, לֹא כְרָעַתָּם תִּגְמַל.

Sovereign God, whose throne is mercy, You guide the world with steadfast love, forgiving the transgressions of Your people; You pardon all who sin, are generous with all who live, treating them with compassion.

אֵל, הוֹרִיתָ לָנוּ לוֹמַר שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה. זָכַר לָנוּ הַיּוֹם
 בְּרִית שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה, כְּמוֹ שֶׁהוֹדַעְתָּ לְעַנּוֹ מִקֶּדֶם, כְּמוֹ
 שֶׁכָּתוּב: "וַיֵּרֶד יְיָ בְּעָנָן, וַיִּתְיַצֵּב עִמּוֹ שָׁם, וַיִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁם
 יְיָ. וַיַּעֲבֹר יְיָ עַל פְּנֵיו וַיִּקְרָא:

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You have taught us, O God, Your covenant with life. This day remember Your covenant, revealed from of old to Moses, the humble one. As it is written: The Lord descended in a cloud and stood with him there and revealed the divine nature. The Lord passed before Moses and said:

יְיָ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי רַחוּם וְחַנוּן, אֶרְךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת,
נִצַּר חֶסֶד לְאֱלֹפַיִם, נִשְׂא עוֹן וּפְשָׁע וְחַטָּאָה וְנִקְיָה.

The Lord, the Lord God is merciful and gracious,

endlessly patient,

loving and true,

showing mercy to thousands,

forgiving our sin,

and granting pardon.

We pray with Moses:

*Pardon our sin;
call us Your own,
call us Your own.*

וְסַלַחְתָּ לְעוֹנֵינוּ
וְלַחַטָּאתֵינוּ
וְנִחַלְתֵנוּ.



וַיְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
שֶׁתִּשְׁבַּר וְתִשְׁבִּית עָלָינוּ שְׁלֵי־יִצַּר הָרַע מִלִּבֵּנוּ, שְׂכָרְךָ
בְּרֵאתֵנוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנֶךָ, וְאָנוּ חַיִּבִים לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנֶךָ.
אֵת חֶפֶץ וְאָנוּ חֹפְצִים, וּמִי מְעַכְבֵּ? שְׂאוֹר שְׂבַעֲסָה.

גְּלוּי וַיְדוּעַ לְפָנֶיךָ שָׂאִין בָּנוּ כָּח לַעֲמֹד בּוֹ, אֱלֹא יְהִי
 רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
 שְׁתַּשְׁבִּיתָהוּ מֵעַלְיֵנוּ וְתִכְנִיעָהוּ, וְנַעֲשֶׂה רְצוֹנְךָ
 כְּרְצוֹנְנוּ בְּלֵב בָּשָׂלִים.

Lord our God and God of all generations, help us to overcome the impulse to do evil. You have created us able to do Your will, but in our nature there is a wayward spirit that hinders us and keeps us from doing what we should. O Lord our God, help us to subdue it, so that we may, with a whole heart, make Your will our own.



Ha·shi·vei·nu A·do·nai ei·le·cha,
 ve·na·shu·vah.
 cha·deish ya·mei·nu ke·ke·dem.

הַשִּׁיבֵנו יְיָ אֵלֶיךָ,
 וְנִשְׁוֶבָה.
 חַדֵּשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֵדָם.

Help us to return to You, O Lord: then truly shall we return.
 Renew our days as in the past.



Your mercy, O God of all life, extends to all who live. You turn from our transgressions, that we may turn to You. For You love all beings, despising nothing that You have made. For how could You hate what You have established, and what would endure without Your love? All things are touched by Your grace, for they are Yours. Lord, You take delight in life, for Your eternal spirit dwells in all that breathes.



וּבְכֵן יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
שֶׁתְּסַלַח לָנוּ עַל כָּל-חַטֹּאתֵינוּ וְתִמְחַל לָנוּ עַל
כָּל-עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ וְתִכַּפֵּר-לָנוּ עַל כָּל-פְּשָׁעֵינוּ.

Now may it be Your will, O Lord God of all the genera-
tions, to pardon all our sins, to forgive all our wrong-
doings, and to blot out all our transgressions:

LONG CONFESSION

וידוי רבה

על חטא

עַל חֵטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּאִנּוּס וּבְרְצוֹן.

*The sin we have committed against You under duress or
by choice.*

עַל חֵטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּזֵדוֹן וּבְשִׁגְגָה.

*The sin we have committed against You consciously or
unconsciously.*

וְעַל חֵטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּגָלוּי וּבִסְתֵר.

*And the sin we have committed against You openly or
secretly.*

עַל חֵטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׂנְאָת חִנָּם.

*The sin we have committed against You by hating without
cause.*

עַל חֵטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּמִשָּׂא וּבְמִתָּן.

*The sin we have committed against You by dishonesty in
business.*

וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטְאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּהוֹנָאֵת רַע.

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

Ve·al ku·lam, E·lo·ah
se·li·chot, se·lach la·nu,
me·chal la·nu, ka·per la·nu!

וְעַל כָּלֵם, אֱלֹהִים
סְלִיחוֹת, סְלַח לָנוּ,
מַחֵל לָנוּ, בְּפֶרֶר-לָנוּ!

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



עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטְאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ . . .

We have sinned against life by failing to work for peace.

We have sinned against life by keeping silent in the face of injustice.

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטְאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ . . .

We have sinned against life by ignoring those who suffer in distant lands.

We have sinned against life by forgetting the poor in our own midst.

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטְאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ . . .

We have failed to respect those made in the image of God.

We have withheld our love from those who depend on us.

עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ . . .

We have engaged in gossip and in repeated slander.

We have distorted the truth for our own advantage.

עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ . . .

We have conformed to fashion and not to conscience.

We have indulged in despair and trafficked with cynics.

עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ . . .

We have given meager support to our Houses of Study.

We have neglected our heritage of learning.

עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ . . .

We have sinned against ourselves and paid scant heed to the life of the spirit.

We have sinned against ourselves and have not risen to fulfill the best that is in us.

Ve·al ku·lam, E·lo·ah
se·li·chot, se·lach la·nu,
me·chal la·nu, ka·per la·nu!

וְעַל כָּלֵם, אֱלֹהִים
סְלִיחוֹת, סְלַח לָנוּ,
מְחַל לָנוּ, בְּפֶרֶר-לָנוּ!

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



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God before whom words must be true, we acknowledge our faults and our failings. Help us now to strengthen the good impulse within us.

Help us to care about wrongs from which we have been spared; to seek forgiveness for the wrongs we shall do; to forgive the wrongs that are done to us.

Create in us a clean heart, and place a willing spirit within us.

Shed Your light upon us, O God, that we may see the goodness in each of Your children.



MEDITATION

Keep me, O God, from bad intentions and from excessive pride; help me at all times to govern my passions and master my inclinations. Against melancholy and bitterness defend my soul; guard my tongue against slander and deceit, and open my eyes to the virtues of others.



A·vi·nu· mal·kei·nu, cho·nei·nu

va·a·nei·nu, ki ein ba·nu

ma·a·sim, a sei i·ma·nu

tse·da·kah va·che·sed, ve·ho·shi·ei·nu.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵינוּ, חֲנֻנוּ

וְעָנֵנוּ, כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ

מַעֲשִׂים, עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ

צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד, וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

Our Father, our King, be gracious and answer us, even when we have little merit; treat us generously and with kindness, and be our help.



SELICHOT

IN GOD'S PRESENCE

Before the open Ark

אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם, דְּרַשְׁנוּךָ: הַמְצֵא-לָנוּ.

Our God above, we seek You; grant that we may find You.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם, גְּלֵה כְבוֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ עָלֵינוּ.

Our God above, reveal to us the glory of Your kingdom.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם, קַרְבְּנוּ לְעַבְדְּךָ.

Our God above, draw us near to Your service.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם, צִוֵּה אֶתְנוּ בְּרִכּוֹתֶיךָ.

Our God above, grant us Your blessings.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם, צִוֵּה אֶתְנוּ יְשׁוּעוֹתֶיךָ.

Our God above, help us with Your saving acts.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם, שִׁית שְׁלוֹם בֵּינֵינוּ.

Our God above, let peace reign among us.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם, תֵּן שְׁלוֹם בְּאֶרֶץ.

Our God above, grant peace to the earth.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם, תֵּן שָׂבַע בְּעוֹלָמְךָ.

Our God above, grant abundance to Your world.

חַנּוּנוֹ, יְיָ, חַנּוּנוֹ, כִּי רַב שָׁבַעְנוּ בּוֹז. בְּרָגוּ רַחֵם תִּזְכּוֹר.
כִּי הוּא יָדַע יִצְרָנוּ, זָכוֹר כִּי עָפָר אֲנַחְנוּ.

Be gracious, Lord, be gracious to us; our cup of sorrows is full: behold us with compassion. Remember how we are made; remember that we are dust.

עֲזָרְנוּ, אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵנוּ, עַל דְּבַר כְּבוֹד שְׁמֶךָ,
וְהַצִּילָנוּ וְכַפֵּר עַל חַטָּאתֵינוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ.

*O God our Help, as Your nature is Your glory, save us;
help us atone for our sins, that Your will may prevail.*



Ha·shi·vei·nu A·do·nai ei·le·cha,
ve·na·shu·vah.
cha·deish ya·mei·nu ke·ke·dem.

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְיָ אֵלֶיךָ,
וְנָשׁוּבָה.
חַדֵּשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֵדָם.

Help us to return to You, O Lord; then truly shall we return.
Renew our days as in the past.



תְּקִיעַה גְּדוּלָה

TEKIAH GEDOLAH