Yom Kippur N’ilah Service
Closing of the Gates

Mishkan Hanefesh
Machzor for the Days of Awe
El Nora Alilah

אל נורא עלילה, אל נורא עלילה.
המצלמים על אלו חלילה, בשעת広がり.

El nora alilah, El nora alilah

hamtzei lanu m’chilah, bishat han’ilah

מאת המשנים חלילה, לא ינופשינו.
ואל נורא עלילה...

M’tei mispar k’ruim, l’cha aim nosim,

Umsal’dim b’chilah, bishat han’ilah.  El nora alilah...

שופכים לא ינפשו, מהו פשענו וברחנו.
המצלמים על אלו חלילה, בשעת広がり.

Shofchim l’cha nafsham, m’cheih fisham v’chachsham,

hamtzi-eim m’chilah, bishat han’ilah.  El nora alilah...
Our Creator, God of awe,
God sublime, whose deeds are true,
have compassion, grant us pardon,
as we enter *N’ilah*.

“Small in Number,” we are called—
we who lift our eyes to seek You,
and with trembling hearts, beseech You,
in this hour of *N’ilah*.

For You our very life pours forth:
free us of falsehood, rid us of sin;
Fount of forgiveness, show us Your mercy,
as we enter *N’ilah*.
Be our true and faithful shelter;  
embrace us in grief, console us in pain;  
seal us for honor, contentment, and joy,  
in this hour of *N'ilah*.

With grace and compassion  
oppose the oppressors, bring judgment to foes;  
oust the ones who war against us,  
as we enter *N'ilah*.

Recall our mothers, remember our fathers;  
renew their righteousness in our days.  
Be near to us as You were to them,  
in this hour of *N'ilah*.
Proclaim for us a year of favor; 
restore the unity to Your flock. 
Return this remnant to its glory, 
as we enter *N’ilah*.

Daughters and sons, be worthy of your years — 
may they be many, and filled with joy! 
Bless us, *Avinu*, bless us with gladness, 
in this hour of *N’ilah*. 
This is the fast I chose:
it reminds me that I can master the appetites of my body
and decide when and how I will satisfy them.
This is the fast I chose:
lifting me, for this one holy day, above my animal nature.
This is the fast I chose:
it teaches me that I am a human being
capable of reflection, self-discipline and moral behavior.
I chose this fast as an act of purification;
I rededicate myself to a life of purpose.
I chose this fast as an act of solidarity;
I link myself to my Jewish brothers and sisters everywhere.
I chose this fast as a spur to compassion;
I will not forget those who hunger
and suffer all over the earth.
As my ancestors once drew near to You by making an offering on the altar, so I have made an offering of myself—my bodily strength diminished, my pride brought low.

Willingly and intentionally, I chose this fast. May I carry its lessons with me when I leave this place.

AS MY ANCESTORS . . . BROUGHT LOW. Based on a passage in Talmud B’rachot 17a: Upon completing his fast, Rav Sheishet would say: “Master of the universe, You know that when the Temple stood, one who sinned would bring a sacrifice—offering only the fat and the blood, and yet gaining atonement. As my fat and blood have been diminished [through fasting], may You accept them as my offering and grant me favor.”
In Praise of God’s Hands

When I consider the heavens, the work of Your hands; when I gaze at the sea of space and its endless array of stars; when I set out to understand this marvel and its Maker — Your greatness overwhelms me. Your majesty makes me tremble with awe. What are we, that You have given us eyes to glimpse Your truth? What am I, that You have given me a mind to fathom hints of Your purpose?
We are witnesses to nature’s repeated refrains — forests dancing with life, mountains rising like prayers, oceans bursting forth with hymns. In the midst of this beauty, You have placed within humanity two worlds: mortal flesh and immortal soul; finite matter and infinite spirit. You have taught us to live at peace with the earth and with all living beings, and to care for the works of Your hands. But something deep within us darkens the soul.
In nature, spring follows winter; but human behavior is far less certain. Called to a life of righteousness, we rebel, possessed by arrogance and unrestrained ambition. Again and again we speak of the struggle between good and evil, love and hate, forgetting that the power to choose is the greatness and glory of our humanity. In our forgetfulness, life loses its beauty and we hear a voice of judgment: Where are you? How you have fallen!
In this hour of N’ilah, as day fades into dusk, we hear another voice. It says:

אַתָּה נוֹתֵן יַד לְפֶאָשִׁים וְיִמְינֵךְ פְּשׁוֹטָה לִקְבֵּל שָׁבִי
Atah notein yad l’foshim, vimincha f’shutah l’kabeil shavim.

You hold out Your hand to those who do wrong; Your right hand opens wide to receive those who return. The gates of Your forgiveness are open wide.

WHEN I CONSIDER THE HEAVENS. Adapted from Psalm 8:4–5. In that psalm, the sight of the night sky inspires thoughts of humanity’s smallness in relation to the Divine, but also the grandeur of being made in the divine image. This contemporary prayer, adapted from the Reform prayer book of Rabbi David Einhorn (1809–1879), also evokes the double nature of humanity: bound by earthly desires yet yearning for transcendent goodness. “You hold out Your hand” expresses the increasing sense of God’s nearness in the hour of N’ilah.
Adonai, s’fatai tiftach —
ufi yagid t’hilatecha.

Adonai, open my lips,
that my mouth may declare Your praise.

ADONAI, OPEN MY LIPS, אֲדוֹנָי, שִפְתֵּי תַפֵּקַח, Psalm 51:17.
You are the Source of blessing, Adonai, our God and God of our fathers and mothers: God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob; God of Sarah, God of Rebecca, God of Rachel, and God of Leah; exalted God, dynamic in power, inspiring awe, God sublime, Creator of all —
v'zocheir chasdei avot v'imahot,
umeivi g'ulah livnei v'neihem,
l'maan sh'mo b'ahavah.

Zochreinu l'chayim,
Melech chafeitz bachayim.

v'chotmeinu b'sefer hachayim,
l'maancha, Elohim chayim.

Melech ozeir umoshia umagein —

yet You offer us kindness, recall the loving deeds of our fathers and mothers, and bring redemption to their children's children, acting in love for the sake of Your name. Remember us for life, sovereign God who treasures life. Seal us in the Book of Life, for Your sake, God of life. Sovereign of salvation, Pillar of protection —
ברוך אתה, גֵּוי מַעַן אֲבָרָהָם וּבֶשָּׂרָת סָרָה.

Baruch atah, Adonai, magein Avraham v’ezrat Sarah.

Blessed are You in our lives, Adonai,
Shield of Abraham, Sustainer of Sarah.
Atah gibor l’olam, Adonai — אַתָּה גִּבֹּר לְוָלָם, אֲדֹנָי —
m’chayeih hakol/meitim atah, מְחַיֵּה הַכֹּל/מְאֵיתִים אֲתָה,
rav l’hoshia. רַב לִּהוּשְׁיָה.

Morid hatal. מְוָרִיד הָטָּל.

M’chalkeil chayim b’chesed, מְחַלֵּיק חַיֵּים בְּכֶשֶׁד,
m’chayeih hakol/meitim מְחַיֵּה הַכֹּל/מְאֵיתִים,
b’rachamim rabim — בְּרָחָמִים רַבִּים —
someich noflim, סומְךָ נְפוֹלִים,
v’rofei cholim umatir asurim; וְרוֹפֵאֵי חֹלִים וּמְתִירֵי אָסֻרִים,
umkayeim emunato lisheinei afar. וּמַקְיֵה אֶמוּנָתוֹ לְישֵׁנֵיהָ אָפָר.

Your life-giving power is forever, Adonai — with us in life and in death. You liberate and save, cause dew to descend; and with mercy abundant, lovingly nurture all life. From life to death, You are the force that flows without end — You support the falling, heal the sick, free the imprisoned and confined; You are faithful, even to those who rest in the dust.
Mi chamocha, baal g'vurot; ממי כמות, באול גוצרות,
umi domeh-lach? — והמי דומא לך,
melech meimit umchayeh מלךمصית חיים
umatzmiach y’shuah. ומצמיח ישועה.

Mi chamocha, El harachamim? — ממי כמות, אל הרחמים,
zocheir y’tzurav l’chayim b’rachamim. זוכי צורו לחיים ברחמים.

V’ne-eman atah l’hachayot ואמך אומת לחיות
hakol/meitim. כל מהימ.

Power-beyond-Power, from whom salvation springs, Sovereign over life and death — who is like You? Merciful God, who compares with You? With tender compassion You remember all creatures for life. Faithful and true, worthy of our trust — You sustain our immortal yearnings; in You we place our undying hopes.
ברוך אתה, יהוה, מחייה כלחומית.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, m’chayeih hakol/hameitim.*

Wellspring of blessing, Power eternal,
You are the One who gives and renews all life.
Pit·chu·lanu shaarei·tzedek;
navo vam, nodeh Yah.

Open the gates of righteousness for us; 
open the gates that we may enter and praise the Eternal.

Open the gates for us, for all Israel, and for people everywhere:
the gates of acceptance and atonement, beauty and creativity;
the gates of dignity, empathy, and faith;
the gates of generosity and hope, insight and joy;
the gates of knowledge and love, meaning and nobility;
the gates of openness, patience, and the quest for peace;
the gates of renewal, song, and tranquility;
the gates of understanding and virtue;
the gates of wisdom and wonder; exultation, youth and old age;
the gates of Zion — reborn and rebuilt in our time.
Open the gates; open them wide — show us the way to enter.
Closing Words of HaT’filah —
Forgiveness, Zion, Covenant, and Peace

Eloheinu v’Elohei avoteinu v’imoteinu,
Our God and God of all generations,
on this Great Sabbath of Forgiveness,
forgive our moral failings;
on this Great Sabbath of Goodness,
teach us to be satisfied with Your goodness;
on this Great Sabbath of Atonement,
purify our hearts to serve You in truth.
Blessed are You, Adonai:
Year after year You set us on the path from guilt to holiness.

Our God and God of all generations,
let us feel Your nearness;
let us know Your love.
Baruch atah, Adonai, hamachazir Sh’chinato l’Tziyon.
Let our eyes and hearts experience Your Presence in Zion.

God of goodness, mercy, and hope,
we are grateful for Your gifts of love and compassion.
Seal us today for a life of integrity, lived in covenant with You.

God of peace, grant us peace — Your most precious gift.
You have given us freedom to choose between good and evil,
life and death.
May we choose life and good,
that our children may inherit from us the blessing of peace.
May we and the whole family of Israel
be remembered and sealed in the Book of Life.

Blessed is forgiveness and blessed are goodness, mercy, and love.
Blessed is the nearness of Divine Presence and blessed is the hope
for peace.
ברוך אתה, יִי, צְבָא חַלּוֹם

Baruch atah, Adonai, oseih hashalom.

You are the Blessed One, the Eternal One, Source of peace.
Open the Gates

P’tach lanu shaar,
b’eit n’ilat shaar,
ki fanah yom.

Hayom yifneh;
hashemesh yavo v’yifneh.
Navo·ah sh’arecha!

Open a gate for us when the gates are being closed, for the day is about to fade.

The day shall end, the sun shall set. Let us enter Your gates!
Ana El na:

Sa na. S’lach na.


K’vosh cheit v’avon.

Holy One, we pray:
Please — be patient.
Please — pardon and forgive.
Please — show compassion.
Please — lead us to atonement.
And help us, please help us to conquer injustice and triumph over sin.
Your Promise Is Forever

God Most High, Your promise is forever.

Even when prayer is a struggle
and You seem far away
the doors open wide for the repentant.

Like the stoutness of oak trees —
so is our stubbornness.

Like thorns and thistles —
so is our malice.

And yet You say:
return, rebellious children.
seek My face with tears and supplication.
God Most High, Your promise is forever.

Impoverished,
we knock on Your door, seeking kindness,
lamenting our lot —

Remember us!
Recall us for a full life!
May Your ancient love come to us quickly.

And You say:
Come to Me with thanksgiving and songs.

God Most High, Your promise is forever.
Ki anu amecha, v’atah Eloheinu;
anu vanecha, v’atah avinu.
Anu avadecha, v’atah adoneinu;
anu k’haelecha, v’atah chelkeinu.
Anu nachalatecha, v’atah goraleinu;
anu tzonecha, v’atah ro-einu.

Our God and God of our ancestors —

We are Your people; and You are our God.
We are Your children; and You are our father, our mother.
We are the people who serve You; and You call us to serve.
We are Your community; and You are our portion.
We are Your legacy; and You are our purpose.
We are Your flock; and You are our shepherd.
We are Your vineyard; and You watch over us.
Anu charmacha, v’atah notreinu;  
anu f’ulatecha, v’atah yotzreinu. 
Anu rayatecha, v’atah dodeinu;  
anu s’gulatecha, v’atah k’roveinu.
Anu amecha, v’atah malkeinu;  
anu maamirecha,
v’atah maamireinu.

We are Your work; and You are our maker. 
We are Your beloved; and You are our lover. 
We are Your treasure; and You are the one we cherish. 
We are Your people; and You reign over us. 
We offer You our words; and You offer us Yours.

So forgive us, pardon us, lead us to atonement.
How Do We Offer the N’ilah Confession?

With Honesty and Humility

Anu azei fanim, v’atah rachum v’chanun.

Anu k’shei oref,

v’atah erech apayim.

Anu m’lei-ei avon, v’atah malei rachamim.

Anu yameinu k’tzeil oveir,

v’atah hu —

ushnotecha lo yitamu.

We are insolent — but You are compassionate and gracious.
We are stubborn and stiff-necked — but You are slow to anger.
We persist in doing wrong — but You are the essence of mercy.
Our days are a shadow passing by, but You — You are existence itself,
Your years never ending.
How Do We Offer the N’ilah Confession?

With a Moment of Self-Reflection

Our God and God of all generations, may our prayers reach Your presence. And when we turn to You, do not be indifferent. Adonai, we are arrogant and stubborn, claiming to be blameless and free of sin. In truth, we have stumbled and strayed. We have done wrong.
How Do We Offer the N’ilah Confession?

With All Our Heart, with All Our Mind, with All Our Being

Ashamnu, bagadnu, gazalnu,
dibarnu dofi. He-evinu, v’hirshanu,
zadnu, chamasnu, tafalnu sheker.
Yaatznu ra, kizavnu, latznu,
maradnu, niatznu, sararnu, avinu,
pashanu, tzararnu, kishinu oref.
Rashanu, shichatnu,
tiavnu, ta-inu, titanu.

Of these wrongs we are guilty:

We betray. We steal. We scorn. We act perversely.
We are cruel. We scheme. We are violent. We slander.
We devise evil. We lie. We ridicule. We disobey.
We abuse. We defy. We corrupt. We commit crimes.
We are hostile. We are stubborn. We are immoral. We kill.
We spoil. We go astray. We lead others astray.
Mah nomar l’faneca,
yosheiv marom?
Umah n’sapeir l’faneca,
shochein sh’chakim?
Halo kol hanistarot v’haniglot
atah yodei·a.

What can we say to You whose existence is beyond time and space?
What words of ours can reach Your realm beyond the clouds, beyond heaven itself?
Every hidden mystery, every revelation — surely, You know them all.
You Sit, Waiting

My God, my God,
Mighty One of my existence,
have mercy on Your lost child
who has wandered
from the ancestral path. . . .

I know
that You are far beyond me;
elevated above my ken,
are You, my God.
Yet this I know too:

Somewhere,
in the hidden places,
You sit, waiting eternally
for the last of Your servants,
who strives to come into Your gates
in faith. . . .

YOU SIT, WAITING. From a longer poem by Hillel Bavli (1893–1961).
We loved. And we wept. We were kind—and spoke thoughtfully.
We were faithful and trusting. We put forth effort.
We were mindful. We embraced.
We took delight in the holy books.
We were creative. And we yearned.
We fought for justice—and searched out the good.
We tried our best. And we were attentive.
We did what You commanded us to do.
We found meaning in Torah.
And, most of the time, we did what is right.
We proclaimed Your name. And we were accepting.
We were joyful. And we cared.
**OUR SAGES TEACH:**
As soon as the fast of Yom Kippur concludes, pound the first nail into the sukkah!

To everything there is a season—a time for prayer and looking inward, a time to go outside and build.

**AS SOON AS . . . INTO THE SUKKAH.** From the commentary of Rabbi Moses Isserles (d. 1572) that accompanies the *Shulchan Aruch*, the authoritative code of Jewish law compiled by Rabbi Joseph Caro (1488–1575).

**ISSERLERES TEACHES** that by starting to build the sukkah immediately after the close of Yom Kippur, we move from one sacred mitzvah to the next, thus fulfilling the words of Psalm 84:8 about the righteous: “they go from strength to strength” (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 624.5). The Talmud (*B’rachot* 64a) comments that the righteous are never at rest; they continue to strive for improvement throughout their lives, and even in the next world.

**TO EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON.** The opening of the third chapter of Ecclesiastes, the book traditionally read during Sukkot.
So it is written:
“One mitzvah inspires another.”
May this long day of fasting and self-denial inspire acts of creativity, generosity, and joy.
May we go from strength to strength.

As this day has been a refuge for the spirit, may we shelter one another in the sukkah.
As we have shared worship and t’shuvah, may we share hospitality and friendship in the days to come. Mindful that our days are fleeting, we prepare to taste the sweet fruits of this season; to cherish life, to celebrate the light.

Avinu Malkeinu

אבירי מלכות, קבל ברחמיך וברצון את תפילהנו.

Avinu Malkeinu, kabeil b’rachamim uvratzon et t’filateinu.

Avinu Malkeinu — Almighty and Merciful —
welcome our prayer with love; accept and embrace it.

אבירי מלכות, ביש למתן חפצים רבים.

Avinu Malkeinu, aseih l’maan rachamecha harabim.

Avinu Malkeinu, act for the sake of Your boundless compassion.

אבירי מלכות, בישו הצלה לעצמו שמות.

Avinu Malkeinu, aseih imanu l’maan sh’mecha.

Avinu Malkeinu, act toward us as befits Your name.
Avinu Malkeinu, chotmeinu b’sefer parnasah v’chalkalah.
Avinu Malkeinu, seal us in the Book of Sustenance and Livelihood.

Avinu Malkeinu, chotmeinu b’sefer z’chuyot.
Avinu Malkeinu, seal us in the Book of Worthiness and Merit.

Avinu Malkeinu, chotmeinu b’sefer s’lichah umchilah.
Avinu Malkeinu, seal us in the Book of Forgiveness and Pardon.

Avinu Malkeinu, chotmeinu b’sefer chayim tovim.
Avinu Malkeinu, seal us in the Book of Lives Well Lived.
Avinu Malkeinu, chotmeinu b’sefer g’ulah vishuah.
Avinu Malkeinu, seal us in the Book of Redemption and Renewal.

Avinu Malkeinu, malei yadeinu mibirchotecha.
Avinu Malkeinu, let our hands overflow with Your blessings.

Avinu Malkeinu, p’tach shaarei shayim litfilateinu.
Avinu Malkeinu, let the gates of heaven be open to our prayer.

Avinu Malkeinu, chadeish aleinu shanah tovah.
Avinu Malkeinu, renew us for a year of goodness.
Avinu Malkeinu, we have no Sovereign but You.

Avinu Malkeinu, choneinu vaaneinu ki ein banu maasim.
Aseih imanu tz’dakah vachesed, v’hoshi-einu.

Avinu Malkeinu — Almighty and Merciful — answer us with grace when our deeds are wanting.
Save us through acts of justice and love.

WHEN OUR DEEDS ARE WANTING. From the evening of Rosh HaShanah until the afternoon of Yom Kippur, we sing: “Answer us with grace, for our deeds our wanting.” Now, in N’ilah, having engaged in the process of t’shuvah (return) and cheshbon hanefesh (accounting of the soul), we experience this final moment of Avinu Malkeinu in a unique way. The tiny word ki makes all the difference: it can mean either “for” or “when.” The latter suggests that, though we are bound to miss the mark in the year ahead, we now leave behind a year’s worth of guilt — serene in the knowledge that we can start fresh. Our deeds are not wanting. Truly this is a moment of joy and renewal.
As We Are Sealed — Open Us

Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your hand. . . .

As the Book of Life is closed and sealed—open our hearts, open our hands.
Let those who asked forgiveness and those who gave forgiveness
depart this place in peace.
Let all God-seekers and soul-searchers of this day
depart this place inspired and renewed.
Together let us build a community of commitment.

SET ME AS A SEAL. Song of Songs 8:6.
Let all of us be sealed this day—
גָּמָר חַטִּימָה טובָה
sealed for goodness and sealed for life
בְּסֵפֶר חַיִּים טובִים
sealed in the Book of Life and Good,
eager to taste life’s sweetness,
to enjoy the fruit of our labors,
to bring light to the darkness
and joy where sorrow dwells.

ENJOY THE FRUIT. Based on Psalm 128:2.
Be sealed for a year of Torah and soulful searching.
Be sealed for a year of kindness, good deeds, and love.
As the Book of Life is closed and sealed—
open our hands, open our hearts.
From Psalm 24

S’u sh’arim, rasheichem!
Us·u pit·chei olam,
v’yavo melech hakavod.
Mi hu zeh melech hakavod?
Adonai tz’vaot —
hu melech hakavod. Selah.

Sha·o sha·re·im ra·shiy·kem
ye·a·o petha·i olam,
va·rei me·lekh ha·kavod
mi ha·a ze me·lekh ha·kavod
yi·’avay·thi,
ha·a me·lekh ha·kavod. Selah.

Lift yourselves, gates of heaven — rise high!
Be carried aloft, everlasting portals,
that the Sovereign of Splendor may enter.

Who is the Sovereign of Splendor?
The eternal Soul of the universe, the Sublime —
this is the Sovereign of Splendor.
As the Day Ends

We stand as one before the gates of a new year — renewed by this Day of Atonement, made stronger by all who are with us and by those whose presence we feel within.

As the long day fades into dusk, we join our voices in words of hope and dedication:

فتحו לנו שערי צדק, ובאמות, נודות יוה.

 Pit·chu·lanu shaarei·tzedek; navo vam, nodeh Yah.

Open for us the gates of righteousness, that we may enter and praise the Eternal Source of Life.
Open for us the gates of sacred community, that we may enter and feel its healing power.

Open for us the gates of truth and integrity, that we may enter and grow in faithfulness.

Open for us the gates of devotion and principle, that we may enter and find enduring values and meaning.
Open for us the gates of repentance and return, that we may enter and offer our best.

Open for us the gates of forgiveness, that we may enter and offer our humanity.

Open for us the gates of kindness and compassion, that we may enter and offer our love.

OPEN FOR US THE GATES. In the Book of Psalms (118:19) the verse reads: “Open for me the gates of righteousness” — a beautiful prayer for private devotion. But N’’ilah is not a moment of solitude. In the last minutes of this powerful day, we express our solidarity as a congregation and our solidarity with the Jewish people. We do this by saying, “Open for us . . .”
Sh’mi, Yisrael: Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai echad.
Listen, Israel: Adonai is our God, Adonai is One.

Baruch shem k’vod malchuto l’olam va·ed.
Blessed is God’s glorious majesty forever and ever.

Adonai, hu haElohim.
Adonai is God.
Shofar

T’kiah
sh’varim
t’ruah
T’kiah G’dolah
לשהנה הבאות בירושלים!

Lashanah habaah birushalayim!
Next year in Jerusalem!
Havdalah
Wine

Baruch atah, Adonai,
Eloheinu melech haolam,
borei p’ri hagafen.

Adonai, our God and Sovereign, Source of blessings,
You create the fruit of the vine.
Spices

Baruch atah, Adonai,
Eloheinu melech haolam,
borei minei v’samim.

Adonai, our God and Sovereign, Source of blessings,
You create spices of every kind.
Lights

Baruch atah, Adonai,
Eloheinu melech haolam,
borei m’orei ha·eish.

Adonai, our God and Sovereign, Source of blessings,
You create the lights of fire.
Baruch atah, Adonai, hamavdil bein kodesh l’chol.
Adonai, Source of blessings,
You distinguish the holy from the everyday.

As You separate sacred from profane,
separate us from our wrongful ways.
Give us a future —
our children countless as grains of sand.
Give us peace —
majestic and beautiful as the starry night.
Shanah tovah, shanah tovah,
shanah tovah, shanah tovah (2x)

A good year, a year of peace —
May gladness reign and joy increase. (2x)
Elijah the Prophet,
Elijah of Tishbi,
Elijah of Gilead:
may he come in our own time,
and reach us without delay.
May he yet fulfill — with love — our hope:
a world perfected and redeemed.
Tizku l’ishanim rabot!

Be worthy of your years — and may they be many!