

Community and Unity

Unity

Leader:

Our congregation is more than a congregation. It is more than a collection of people. It is a community of friends, an alliance of believers.

Reader:

We are engaged in shared work. We are moved by shared ideals. There is a solidarity of purpose, a unity of goals. When we celebrate, we celebrate together. And when we need support, we support each other.

Leader:

Our congregation is more than an institution. It is more than a casual assumption. It is a family of choice, a fellowship of like-minded people. Our bonds are more than convenience and tradition.

All:

We have chosen to be here because we want to be here.

Reader:

We have chosen to be here because we need to be here — because standing alone is never as inspiring as standing together.

(Rabbi Sherwin Wine)

Identity

Leader:

The Day of Atonement is a time when we seek to feel at one with all the sources of our being. . .

. . . with the living world of nature, as the splendid days of autumn emerge out of the lush abundance of summer . . .

. . .with our selves in our search for the integrity of belief and action, mind and body. . .

. . .with family and friends, whose encouragement strengthens our resolve.

Above all, on this special day, we strive to feel at one with a living people whose unique experience gives us a rich identity.

Reader:

Most of us do not choose to be Jewish. We discover our Jewishness in countless ways as we learn about self and family. For some of us, being Jewish is a minor enterprise, subordinate to larger concerns. For many of us, Jewishness is a central commitment, demanding a major allocation of energy and time.

All:

All of us come together to celebrate our kinship. We belong to an ancient family whose story still unfolds in lands we shall never see, and in our own homes and lives.

At this moment, distance and time collapse. We are at one with our people.

(Rabbi Daniel Friedman)

Song: Heiveinu Shalom Aleikhem

No Man Is an Island

Reader:

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.

(John Donne)

Come, Unity

Leader:

When we come together
Those deeply rooted in the Jewish story
And those who have just begun to walk along this path
Those who worried that they may not be welcomed
Because everyone already knew almost everyone else
Because old hurts told them that these Jews would ignore them too.

Reader:

We are in this place
Forming this community today
And these exact people
Will never be together again

All:

Someone will be missing
Somebody is already walking in late
Some of us won't be able to join this group
 This time
 Next year

Leader:

So come, be here now
Stand in unity with the new member on your left
And your old best friend on your right
With your children in front of you
And your great-great grandparents behind you

Reader:

Come with all your hopes and your dreams and your wishes
And your disappointments and your fears and your losses
And let us hold hands
And share in the project of living

All:

Come, Unity
Because we are all facets and prisms
Of Humanity.

(Rabbi Nehama Benmosche)

Awaken Ourselves

Look to This Day

Leader:

Look at this day,
For it is life,
The very life of life.

Reader:

In its brief course lie all
The realities and verities of existence,
The bliss of growth,
The splendor of action,
The glory of power –
For yesterday is but a dream,
And tomorrow is only a vision.

Leader:

But today, well lived,
Makes every yesterday a dream of happiness
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day.

(Kalidasa, Sanskrit Proverb)

Song: Tzadik Katamar

The Shofar Blasts

Leader:

The shofar sounds our wake-up call. We awake ourselves to change through those familiar sounds.

Song: Tiku Bashofar

(Shofar blower comes forward)

Leader:

Tekiah!

Reader:

The first crisp sound opens our eyes and brings our focus to the task of opening ourselves to this day.

Leader:

Shevarim!

Reader:

Three shorter wails now, announcing that the wheels will continue to turn as we turn and return on this Yom Kippur day.
Each call urging us: Listen! Pay attention!
Be inspired!

Leader:

T'ruah!

Reader:

Nine short staccato blasts this time. We are crying together for all the pain that we have seen in this last year. The loss we have felt in our own lives and the loss we see in the world around us. It's the cry of disbelief and the commitment to heal ourselves and work again for tikkun olam, for repairing our broken world.

Leader:

Tekiah!

Shevarim!

T'ruah!

Tekiah!

(Rabbi Nehama Benmosche)

A Humanistic Sh'ma

(Leader sings, then community repeats:)

Sh'ma Yisrael

Echad ameinu

Adam echad.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל

אֱחָד עַמִּינוּ

אָדָם אֶחָד.

Hear O Israel, our people is one, humanity is one.

(Rabbi Sherwin Wine)

Song: Ve-Ahavtah

A Humanistic Amidah: Standing meditation

Leader:

Omdim anachnu b'yachad.

We stand here, together.

עוֹמְדִים אַנְחֵנוּ בְּיַחַד.

Yet each of us is alone—in our thoughts, and in our wishes and hopes
We stand as the tree trunk with our deep roots in the ground

Reader:

Those who came before us and influenced us

On our spiritual paths

The different roots that brought us to this physical place

All:

Our birth parents, our adoptive parents, our chosen parents and our mentors.

We stretch out from our trunks into branches of influence on the world:

Our children, our works, our influence on others.

Reader:

Who have we lifted up? Who are we giving to? Who will remember us as
their roots as they seek to create their own trunks on the great banyan tree of
human existence?

Leader:

Stand for the meaning that you wish to make of this world and stand for the work that it takes to bring that vision into reality every day.

Reader:

Take this moment to be grateful for the place you hold on the infinite chain of existence into the ever-regressing past and the infinite possibility of tomorrow. Becoming that instance in the span of infinity will bring you to a deep inner peace that you can radiate back into the world.

Leader:

Radiate the hope that every person in this room, that every person honoring this Yom Kippur day, and everyone whose lives are touched by those honor the tradition of finding that compass of true north and seeking to begin the year anew and fresh—that they will all become *rodfei shalom*, those who seek to chase after peace.

All:

And perhaps one day we will all be able to stand together, even if just for a moment, in fulfillment of that constant dream: Peace. *Shalom*.

(Rabbi Nehama Benmosche)

Committed To Peace

If There Is to Be Peace

(Reader and congregation read responsively:)

If there is to be peace in the world,

There must be peace in the nations.

If there is to be peace in the nations,

There must be peace in the cities.

If there is to be peace in the cities,

There must be peace between neighbors.

If there is to be peace between neighbors,

There must be peace in the home.

If there is to be peace in the home,

There must be peace in the heart.

(Lao Tse)

Song: *Yerushalayim Shel Zahav* (Jerusalem of Gold)

We Seek Peace

Leader:

We seek peace. It is the most precious gift we can bestow upon ourselves.

All:

May we find the will to proclaim its message to all the peoples of the earth.
May our country always be a stronghold of peace, and its advocate among the nations.

Leader:

May contentment reign within its borders, health and happiness within its homes.

Reader:

May we strengthen the bonds of friendship among the inhabitants of all lands, and may the love of humanity permeate every home and every heart.

All:

May we labor for righteousness and in so doing author a new book of life, blessing and peace. For we alone are the source of peace.

(Union Prayer Book II, adapted)

Peace

Leader:

Peace is more than an ideal. It's an achievement. There is no divine power that will give it to us for nothing. There are no laws of history that will guarantee its arrival.

Reader:

Peace is hard work. The forces of war and violence are very strong in our world. They hide in the deep unconscious of our mind. They attach themselves to personal greed. They find a friend in the lust for power.

Leader:

Too often our mouth prefers peace, but our behavior prefers war. We praise love and harmony, but we indulge hate and hostility. We endorse kindness, but we subsidize cruelty.

All:

We have to work for peace in the same way that we work for a living. In the age of nuclear destruction, it may be even more important.

(Rabbi Sherwin Wine)

Neutrality

Reader:

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.

(Archbishop Desmond Tutu)

SONG: SACHAKI

Committed to Change

Keeping quiet

Reader:

Now we will count to twelve
and we will all keep still

would not harm whales
and the man gathering salt
would not look at his hurt hands.

All:

For once on the face of the earth,
let's not speak in any language;
let's stop for a second,
and not move our arms so much.

All:

Those who prepare green wars,
wars with gas, wars with fire,
victories with no survivors,
would put on clean clothes
and walk about with their brothers in
the shade, doing nothing.

Leader:

It would be an exotic moment
without rush, without engines,
we would all be together
in a sudden strangeness

Reader:

What I want should not be confused
with total inactivity.

Reader:

Fisherman in the cold sea

Life is what it is about; . . .

If we were not so single-minded
about keeping our lives moving,

and for once could do nothing,
perhaps a huge silence
might interrupt this sadness
of never understanding ourselves
and of threatening ourselves with
death.

(Pablo Neruda)

Leader:

Perhaps the earth can teach us
as when everything seems dead in
winter and later proves to be alive.

Now I'll count to twelve

Vidui—The Alphabet of Our Wrongs

Reader:

Our misdeeds constitute a veritable alphabet of unethical behaviors:

All:

The offense of
arrogance,
bigotry and
cynicism; of
deceit and
egotism,
flattery and
greed, were
haughty, pursued
injustice and indulged our
jealousy.

Leader:

Some of us
kept grudges, were
liars,
malicious or
narrow-minded.

All:

Others were
obstinate or
possessive,
quarrelsome,
rancorous or
selfish.

Reader:

There was
thoughtlessness,
unkindness,

violence,
weakness of will,
xenophobia:

All:

We

yielded to temptation and were
zealous for questionable ends.

(Gates of Repentance, adapted)

Song: Ts'rikhim Anachnu

Meditation: Making peace

(Reader and Congregation Read Responsively:)

For remaining silent when a single voice would have made a difference

We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For each time that our fears have made us rigid and inaccessible

We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For each time that we have struck out in anger without just cause

We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For each time that our greed has blinded us to the needs of others

We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For losing sight of our unity

We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For those and for so many acts both evident and subtle which have fueled the
illusion of separateness

We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

(Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs)

Forgiveness

Leader:

All people try and fail. The wise learn to forgive and try again.
We can be too slow to forgive others. We are long to remember injuries and short to forget assistance.

Reader:

Anger and memory have their place, and forgiveness does not require forgetting. We forgive by choosing not to avenge, by being open to second chances. Forgiving others brings us peace.

All:

We can be too quick to forgive ourselves. We celebrate our successes and quickly explain away our failures.

Leader:

Dwelling on our shortfalls is not healthy, but neither is whitewashing them. Self-forgiveness requires honesty about the sides of ourselves we would rather not face.

Reader:

Forgiving ourselves brings us peace.

All:

Let us pause for a moment of true forgiveness.
Let us forgive others, and let us forgive ourselves.

(Rabbi Adam Chalom)

Teaching: Invitation to Our Speaker

Remembering Our Past

You Do Not Belong to You

(Reader and Congregation Read Responsively:)

You belong to the universe
and you will be reclaimed

*by its constant,
ever-changing heart –*

your wise body
and your spacious mind,

*when you are joyful
or not,*

whether you are ready
or not,

*even as you turn away –
to be buffeted*

and set aloft,
a twig in the wind.

(Marcia Falk)

Song: Naeh Haor

Kaddish

Leader:

Look around us, search above us,
Below, behind.
We stand in a great web of being
Joined together.

Reader:

Let us praise, let us love the life we are lent
Passing through us in the body of Israel
And our own bodies,

All:

Let's say amen.

Leader:

Time flows through us like water.
The past and the dead speak through us.
We breathe out our children's children, blessing.

Reader:

Blessing is the earth from which we grow,
blessed is the life we are lent,
blessed are the ones who teach us,
blessed is the word that cannot say the story
that shines through us and remains to shine
flowing past distant suns on the way to forever.

All:

Let's say amen.

Leader:

Blessed is light, blessed is darkness,
but blessed above all else is peace
which bears the fruits of knowledge
on strong branches,

All:

Let's say amen.

Reader:

Peace that bears joy into the world,
peace that enables love, peace over Israel
everywhere, blessed and holy is peace.

All:

Let's say amen.

(Marge Piercy)

Oifn Pripetchik

A Humanistic Kaddish

(please rise:)

Leader:

Nitgadal v'nitkadash b'ruach ha-adam

נִתְגַּדֵּל וְנִתְקַדַּשׁ בְּרוּחַ הָאָדָם.

All:

Let us enhance and exalt ourselves in the spirit of humanity.
Let us acclaim the preciousness of life.
Let us show gratitude for life by approaching it with reverence.
Let us embrace the whole world, even as we wrestle with its parts.
Let us, each in our own way, take up our share in serving the world and seeking truth.

Reader:

May our commitment to life help us to strengthen healing of spirit and peace of mind.
May healing and peace permeate and comfort all of Israel and all those who dwell on earth.

All:

And let us say: *kein yehi* / קֵן יְהִי – may it be so.

(Jon Dickman and Congregation Kol Shalom, inspired by Rabbi Rami Shapiro)

Song: L'Dor Va-Dor

Believing in Our Future

A Leap of Future

Leader:

There is a time in every generation when some Jews are afraid
When some Jews are threatened
When some Jews are attacked
Because they are Jews

All:

But that is not our only story

Reader:

There are stories of survival
Stories of success
Stories of new beginnings
Stories of laying down new roots

All:

Because another generation becomes the future

Leader:

I do not stand up and ask for a leap of faith
 To the unknown
 To the unknowable
 To believe with me in anything
But one undeniable fact

All:

The future is coming
And we must leap into it

Reader:

Carrying our jars of fallen tears
Our pockets filled with Hebrew letters
And our hope
As the new day dawns

(Rabbi Nehama Benmosche)

Song : Yesh Lanu

The Carob Tree

Leader:

One day Rabbi Yohanan was on a journey and he noticed a man planting a carob tree. He asked him: "How long will it take for this tree to bear fruit?" "Seventy years," the man replied.

He then asked him: "Are you sure you will be alive in seventy years?" The man replied, "I found the world ready with previously planted carob trees. As my forefathers planted them for me, I will plant them for my children."

All:

Today we stop to consider what is growing in the orchard of our lives. What have we planted that generations beyond ourselves can reap?

Reader:

Today we stop to consider the impact of our lives on future generations knowing that in time we, too, will be ancestors.

All:

Today I stand back and survey my land. Today I tend to the soil of my life.
Today I plant so that generations to come can reap.

(Rabbi Tamara Kolton, loosely based on Talmud Ta'anit 23a)

Song: Na'aseh Shalom

We Learn Little

Reader:

We learn little from spoken rules and written advice. Words can inspire us, but rarely do they transform our lives. We learn from people, from the living example of living teachers. A father's integrity, a mother's warm encouragement, a famous leader's determination...

Leader:

People enter our lives and guide us by what they do, not by what they say. They embody the ideal and make it real enough for us to understand.

Reader:

Memory keeps alive the example of great men and women who taught us through action. It also preserves the behavior of more modest guides who touched our lives in simpler ways.

All:

We, too, shall be examples in a future world that we shall never visit. We are teaching others for a tomorrow that is beyond our grasp. Our actions will move others long after our words are forgotten.

Reader:

We are the children of love. We are the heirs of generous hope. Parents and peers, family and friends are forever joined to us by bonds of affection and mutual experience.

All:

The pain of separation never completely disappears, nor does the fond memory of their lives.

Leader:

They are constantly with us, even when we do not think of them. Their influence brings us here, today, that we may honor them by sharing our memories, silently, as a community of caring friends.

(Rabbi Daniel Friedman)

Resolution

(Please rise as we make our final commitments to action and prepare to hear the Shofar for the last time:)

Reader:

Now is the time to do what we need to do.

Now is the time to think about our lives, to think about our behavior, to think about the people we admire and love.

Leader:

Now is the time to gather our strength, to deepen our understanding, to discover our power.

Now is the time to choose first things first, to place our family, our education, and our health above mere fun and play.

Reader:

Now is the time to become the masters of our lives and to rule our feelings.

Now is the time to discover our excuses and to take responsibility for all that we do.

Leader:

Let us say together:

All

We will be honest about our behavior.

We will protect our family.

We will make learning important.

We will guard our health.

We will control our feelings.

We will take responsibility for all that we do.

(Rabbi Sherwin Wine)

Song: Ani V'Atah

(Shofar blower is invited up for the last time:)

Tekiyah Gedolah!!