



A Yom Kippur Companion Guide



General Rules of Yom Kippur:

On Yom Kippur there are 5 prohibitions which must be observed by all healthy adult Jews, from the age of Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

- 1) One may not eat any food nor drink any beverage for the duration of the fast.
- 2) One may not wash any portion of his body (unless he has dirtied himself in mud or something similar). One may wash one's fingers until his knuckles, and he may rinse his eyes in the morning.
- 3) One may not anoint oneself with oils or creams (unless he suffers a medical condition).
- 4) One may not wear leather shoes (any other leather article of clothing is permissible).
- 5) Husbands and wives must refrain from marital relations.

If for any reason fasting will pose a difficulty for anyone, or lead to a dangerous situation, a doctor and a rabbi should be consulted. With regard to the elderly, common sense should be exercised. Fasting strictly depends on the physical condition of the individual.

Some have the custom to wear a "kittel" (a white outer garment) on Yom Kippur, in order to resemble the angels. At minimum, men should wear a tallit.

Tfillah Zaka- The Prayer of Purity - page 38

On Yom Kippur, G-d promises the Jewish people that he will forgive all of our sins. He even guarantees it, so long as it is sincerely sought. The "Itzumo shel Yom"- the very "midst of the day" will forgive our sins. But this applies only to sins committed between man and G-d, or the ritual practices of Judaism, such as eating Kosher, Sabbath observance, and the like. Sins committed between man and man can not be forgiven by G-d alone. His hands are tied, as it were. Only the person before whom the offense was committed can lift the onerous sin. But who can possibly remember all the people we may have offended throughout the year!

The tfillah zaka, authored by Rabbi Avraham Danzig in the 1800's, offered a possible solution to this dilemma. If each and every Jew worldwide would officially forgive any other Jew that he may have offended that year, then every Jew would also be forgiven at the same time. We would be able to walk into Yom Kippur free of sin, those between man and G-d, but more importantly between man and man!

Kol Nidrei - "All our Vows" - page 58

The history of the recitation of Kol Nidrei on Yom Kippur evening dates back to the Gaonic period and is not found in the Talmud. What is Kol Nidrei all about?

According to Torah law, when a person vows to do a certain act or not to do it, and then violates his vow, this is considered a serious violation of the Torah, and he is held accountable. However, unlike any other sin, there exists a way to retroactively nullify a vow, and return the situation to one as if the vow had never occurred. If a person would appear before a Bet Din, or Rabbinical Court consisting of three rabbis, and declare his deep regret for having made his vow, and would explain that had he known of the hardship involved in accepting it, he would never have made it, then the Bet Din would accept his contrition and declare "Mutar lach, Mutar lach" – "It is annulled it is annulled"– three times, and the vow would be retroactively nullified.

The question that must be raised is why should the sin of transgressed vows be singled out? All sins are washed away on Yom Kippur if a penitent sincerely asks G-d's forgiveness? On Yom Kippur the people of Israel are not content with the giving of a simple apology. We want G-d to know that our remorse for our rebellion against Him is so great that we want to undo the sin from ever having occurred. We want to go back in time and erase the sin from ever having happened in the first place.

The only legal model which exists for that is the laws of vows. By reciting Kol Nidrei we convey the idea that we are not only sorry that we violated the Torah, but rather we recognize how our lives could have been different, how our children could have been more committed to Judaism, how our existence until now could have been so much more fulfilled. Kol Nidrei breaks out of our very souls and connects directly with G-d!

The services on Yom Kippur closely parallels the services which took place in the Temple in Jerusalem. The High Priest or Kohen Gadol immersed himself in a Mikva five times, when switching between services performed inside of the “Holy” room of the Temple and the “Holy of Holies” room. To commemorate this fact we daven (pray) five times on Yom Kippur.

- 1) Ma’ariv - the evening service
- 2) Shacharit - the morning service
- 3) Mussaf - the additional service
- 4) Mincha - the afternoon service
- 5) Ne’ilah – the concluding service, which is only introduced on fast days

Ma’ariv

The evening service known as Ma’ariv (sometimes known as Aravit) consists of the recitation of the Shema (Deuteronomy 6/4), preceded by two blessings (one thanking G-d for creating night and day, and the other praising Him for giving us the Torah), and followed by two other blessings (the first praising G-d as our redeemer, and one for spreading peace over Israel and Jerusalem). This is the same for every night of the year; however, for Yom Kippur there are some differences. Most strikingly, the melody of the service is unique (for both Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur), and says like no other tune, the High Holidays have arrived! Furthermore, there are some changes made to the service in honor of the day. Firstly, the second verse of the Shma, “Baruch Shem,” is joyously recited out loud, as opposed to the rest of the year when it is voiced sotto voce (see box). In addition, before the recitation of the Amida, a verse is inserted from the book of Leviticus (16/30) which describes the essence of the day: “For on this day I will forgive you to purify your from all of your sins – before the L-rd you shall be purified!”

Baruch Shem

The second phrase of the Shma, right after Shma Yisrael, is “Baruch shem k’vod malchuto le’olam va’ed” “Blessed is His Name; May His Glorious reign endure forever.” Curiously, this phrase is not found in the Torah itself! Where did it come from? According to one Medrash, when Moses ascended Mt. Sinai to accept the Torah, he overheard the angels singing this lovely prayer. He decided to “steal” this verse and teach it to the people of Israel. Throughout the year, we recite this phrase silently so as not to arouse the ire of the angels, but on Yom Kippur the entire House of Israel are considered just like the angels. Just as they don’t eat or drink, neither do we, just as they don’t sin, neither do we in our observance of Yom Kippur. Hence, we are entitled to shout out this phrase with every confidence!

Viduy - The Confessional Prayer - page 92

According to Rabbeinu Yona of Gerona (13th cent.), the mitzva of repentance consists of four stages:

- 1) Viduy, or confession – The penitent describes the details of the sin he committed.
- 2) Haratah, Remorse – The penitent expresses how badly he feels for having contravened the will of his Creator.
- 3) Kabbalah al HaAtid – Positive resolve for the future. He accepts upon himself never to return to the sin again.
- 4) Azivat HaChet – Abandonment of the sin.



One of the most difficult stages is the first – enumeration of the sin. After all, we have sinned so many times, how could we possibly enumerate all of them! The Rabbis therefore compiled a list of twenty-two general sins, following the order to the Hebrew alphabet. Each time we recite a transgression, we touch our heart with our right fist, in a sign of contrition.

There are two styles of confession, a short version called “Ashamnu, Bagadnu,” and a lengthier one called Al Chet. On Yom Kippur, we recite both viduys five times, in commemoration of the five immersions which the High Priest made in the Mikvah on Yom Kippur.

SLICHOT – PRAYERS OF FORGIVENESS (PAGE 102)

After the sin of the golden calf, Moshe asked G-d for guidance as to the proper way to pray for forgiveness. According to the Midrash, G-d, as it were, dressed in a heavenly Tallit and Tefilin, and recited the thirteen attributes of mercy. Whenever the people of Israel faces a grave emergency, a fast day is declared and that procedure is followed. In addition, over the centuries additional prayers called “Slichot” were included as introductions, in order to enhance the recitation of these attributes. The 13 attributes are sung according to the “Skarbovo” melody (see box).



IMPORTANT SLICHOT

Ya’aleh – pg.102 – May our supplications be heard this evening, may our cries be listened to tomorrow morning, and may our praise find favor with you tomorrow evening!

Ki Hinei KaChomer – pg.120 – We are like clay in the hands of a potter, according to his will we are either fashioned or destroyed. So are we in your hands, Oh G-d, look at the covenant (that You made with our ancestors) and not at our bad deeds!

Shma Koleinu – pg.126 – G-d, hear our prayer! Don’t forsake us, do not take away our souls. Deliver us not into premature old age or feebleness.

Ki Anu Amecha – pg. 128 – For We are Your people, and you are our G-d. This slichah should be sung with gusto!

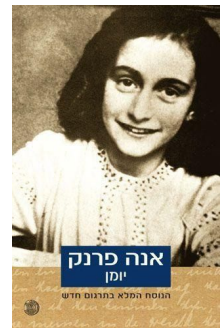
Skarbovo

Skarbovo is a word of uncertain origin, but refers to the sacred melodies of the High Holiday synagogue service. The people of Israel have always introduced new tunes into the yearly services, and often they reflect the musical styles of the country of their origin. On the High Holidays, however, the melodies are considered sacrosanct and must not be tampered with. There are lively debates among Chazanim as to exactly which tunes are considered skarbovo and which are not.



Page 144 – Avinu Malkeinu – Our Father our King

Avinu Malkeinu is a heartrending prayer beseeching G-d to have mercy on us and to protect us from all forms of affliction. The middle section consists of a series of requests in which we ask G-d to inscribe us in the Books of Life, Health and Prosperity. Avinu Malkeinu also contains verses referencing the martyrdom of our people throughout Jewish History. We also ask of G-d to especially recall the children, who throughout the ages suffered just as much as the adults, if not more. The final verse is sung to a heart-stirring, ancient tune, and which over the centuries has become an anthem of the Jewish People.



Shacharit - The Morning Service

Brachos- The Morning Blessings- page 246:



I once knew a fellow who, upon being asked how he was, would respond, “Well, I woke up this morning! Thank G-d I’m alive!!”

The morning blessings remind us that life is a gift. The first words out of our mouths each morning should be “Modeh Ani” (see page 234) – “I am grateful, Oh G-d King of the Universe, that you have restored my life with grace – infinite is your faith in us!! Other blessings (page 250-252) include expressing gratitude for the gift of sight, physical movement, clothing, shoes, protecting us from earthquakes and floods, and perhaps most importantly, we thank G-d for giving strength to the weary.

Kaddish- page 280:

The Kaddish expresses the Jew's deepest desire that G-d be recognized as King by all humanity; that his name be exalted and praised by every possible language of praise; and finally, and most importantly, that G-d cause peace to reign upon the entire house of Israel. The language of the Kaddish is Aramaic, which was the vernacular of most Jews in ancient times.

There are many different forms of Kaddish, and it has many different functions. The most well-known kaddish is that which is recited by the mourner (a.k.a. Kaddish Yatom) and expresses his/her unassailable, fundamental belief that whatever befalls us in life is ultimately in G-d's hands, and we never lose faith in Him. There is also "Rabbis' Kaddish" ("Rabbanan Kaddish"), which contains an extra paragraph blessing the teachers and students of the Torah, wherever they may be found. We bless them with good health, and longevity.

During the prayer service, the Kaddish functions primarily as a demarcation between the various sections of the prayer. The particular Kaddish which is recited is known as "Half-Kaddish" ("Chatzi-Kaddish"), because it skips the added supplications for blessings on the Torah scholars and the prayers for peace upon Israel. If the previous section contains Torah study as part of its format, then Rabbanan Kaddish is recited instead.

Rabbanan Kaddish is recited at this point by all those reciting kaddish.

Chatzi Kaddish is recited only by the cantor.

The most important section of the kaddish is the phrase "Yehei shmei Rabba," May the name of G-d be glorified for all eternity." "Said Rabbi Yehousha ben Levi, whosoever recites Yehei shmei etc. with all his might and all his strength will have the harsh judgments against him, nullified!" (Shabbat 119a). In many Chasidic communities, this phrase is literally shouted out!

Psukei d'Zimra, Verses of Song, pg. 284

Our Rabbis explain that the proper way to make a request from a mortal king is first to placate him with gifts, then make your request, and finally to thank him for the kind opportunity of allowing him an audience. Those three stages are reflected in the construction of our daily prayer service.

Psukei D'Zimra are chapters and verses excerpted mostly (but not exclusively) from the book of Psalms. The beautiful poetry of King David is presented as a gift before G-d, and sets the stage for the following sections. This section begins with the blessing called "Baruch SheAmar," blessed be He, who spoke and brought the world into being." The main central section is called Ashrei (page 304) and is taken from Psalm 145. The subsequent Psalms are recited in order until the end of that book (Psalm 146-150). The final prayer of Psukei d'Zimra begins with "Nishmat Kol Chai" on page 318.



On Rosh Hashana, and Yom Kippur, the Chazan begins his recital of the prayer with the words "HAMELECH"- "THE KING WHO SITS UPON HIS THRONE OF JUDGEMENT." He sings it with great fervor,

and the classic melody inspires us with awe and trepidation!! It is customary that the chazan remain seated when reciting the word “Hamelech,” and only afterward does he ascend the bima with Yoshev.

According to the Kabbalists, the word Zimra can also mean cutting or clearing out. According to their interpretation, the function of the Psukei d’Zimra is to clear the airwaves between ourselves and G-d. As a result of our many sins, the cosmological atmosphere separating G-d and man has become clogged up. The verses of King David have the capacity to clear a path for our prayers.

Why Yom Kippur?

Why must we observe two days of judgment, both Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, shouldn’t one suffice?

Rosh Hashana is the general day of judgment for all mankind, as that day is the anniversary of the creation of man. Yom Kippur is an additional day of atonement for the people of Israel. Since the Jewish people are obligated in so many more commandments, it stands to reason that they need more time to prepare for their defense. Why this date – the tenth of Tishrei? Because on this date Moshe finally procured forgiveness for the people in the aftermath of the sin of the Golden Calf. G-d determined that this date should serve as the ultimate day of atonement for ever after.



Shacharit (i) - Shema & Its Blessings - page 320

The central part of Shacharit (from the word Shachar meaning morning), the morning service, now begins. On a regular day, Shacharit consists of the recital of the three chapters of the Shema- page 344. The recitation of the Shema, is preceded by two blessings. One, praising G-d for the creation light, (page 330-342), and the second blessing and thanking Him for giving us the Torah (pg. 342-344). The Shema prayer is then recited (344-346), followed by a long blessing of thanksgiving to G-d for redeeming us from Egypt, and at the same time expressing confidence in our future redemption with the coming of Moshiach (page 350).

These three extra prayers were composed by the “Men of the Great Assembly” sometime during the second Temple period, and must be recited as they were composed. However, Jews like to daven!! So it happened that during the early Middle Ages (circa 900-1250’s) some great rabbis composed new prayers. On special occasions, and especially during the High Holidays, additional prayers were inserted into the Shacharit and Musaf service. The Shacharit prayers are known as “Yotzrot,” after the first word of the first blessing of the Shema.

During the 1500's many Rabbis questioned the validity of the "new" prayers and wondered if they did not constitute a "hefsek," or unnecessary interruption which might invalidate the whole service! Rabbi Yosef Karo, author of the Shulchan Aruch, did away with the practice altogether, and as a result many Sefardim do not recite Yotzrot. However, Ashkenazic Jewry follow the opinions of the Ramah (acronym for Rav Moshe Isserels), which upheld the custom of reciting Yotzrot. This is our practice today.

Shacharit (ii) - Silent Amida - page 350

We now arrive at the silent Amida prayer. Amida means "standing," but it is differentiated from the other prayers in that it is recited by the congregation silently. Every Amida prayer begins with three initial blessings and ends with three concluding blessings. Those six blessings never change throughout the year and should not be tampered with. However, because of the gravity of the High Holidays an exception was made, and four minor prayers were inserted in them.

- 1) **Zachrenu Lechayim** – Remember us to life (pg. 350)
- 2) **Mi Chamocha** – Who is like you (pg. 350)
- 3) **Uchtov lechayim tovim** – Inscribe us to life (pg. 356), and finally
- 4) **Besefer Chayim** – Inscribe us in the book of life (pg. 358)

During the repetition of the Amida, these phrases are shouted out loud by the congregation before the cantor has a chance to recite them. Another important addition appears at the end of the third blessing known as "Kedushat Hashem," or "sanctity" (pg. 352). During the year, this blessing concludes with the words "HaKel HaKadosh" – the L-rd of Sanctity. On Rosh Hashana, however, this prayer is expanded to eight paragraphs (Uvechain Tein Pachdecha...) and concludes with the words "**HaMelech HaKadosh**" – **The King of Sanctity**¹.

Normally, during a weekday, thirteen short blessings are recited in succession at this point, and they constitute "the requests of the King" which we referred to above (see Psukei D'Zimra). On Shabbat and Holidays, however, these blessing are replaced with one shorter blessing, called Kedushat Hayom – "Sanctity of the Day." This blessing refers to the unique aspects of the given holiday and concludes with the words "Who sanctifies Israel, and the Jewish Holidays." On Rosh Hashana evening and morning, the same formula is followed, and concludes with the words "King of the universe Who sanctifies Israel and The day of Remembrance."

¹ N.B.- *If this addition is omitted, even accidentally, the entire Amida prayer must be recited again!*

Shacharit (iii) - Chazarat HaShatz – Chazan’s Repetition

The Rabbis of the Talmud were well aware of the fact that not all Jews could read Hebrew. The vicissitudes of the exile often made regular Jewish education difficult at best. If the Hebrew of the regular Amida was a problem, this was especially true with regard to the lengthier prayers of Rosh Hashana-Yom Kippur! They therefore instituted the repetition of the Amida for Jews who, for whatever reason, were unable to pray for themselves.

Over the centuries, Jews inserted additional prayers into the Amida, as well. The purpose of these additional prayers was not to overburden the congregation with impressive verbiage, but rather to inspire them to the lofty levels of sheer inspiration. Furthermore, it should be remembered that these poetical prayers (known as Piyutim) were to be sung, not simply recited, and this was welcomed as it enhanced the enjoyment of the service.



The Piyutim come in many different shapes and sizes. Many of them are alphabetical, reverse-alphabetical, or conclude with an acrostic of the author’s name appearing on the first letters of the final phrases. The idea of alphabetizing them was simply to lend them to easy memorization.

It also became customary to open the Ark in honor of these beautiful Poems, as well as to stand in their honor. According to the Taz we do not stand simply because the ark is opened but rather in honor of the Piyut. If one has difficulty standing therefore, one may indeed remain seated.

Here is a summary of the major Piyutim. These Piyutim are to be recited responsively, i.e., the congregation recites a phrase and it is repeated by the Chazan.

Page 376 – **Bashamayim Uba’Aretz Gibor V’na’aratz** – In Heaven and earth who is compared to You! A list of G-d’s infinite attributes

Page 390 – **Imru L’Elokim** – Say unto G-d. **This piyut contains 22 stanzas in the order of the Hebrew alphabet. The final stanza contains the name of the author “Meshulam,” for Meshulam ben Kalonymus, who popularized the Nesaneh Tokef prayer as well.**

Page 404 – **LaKel Orech Din** – To G-d, who prepares man for Judgment. *A listing of G-d’s merciful attributes during His judgment of man. This prayer is usually sung by the Chazan with great intensity of feeling. This piyut also introduces the morning Kedusha, and should be recited at “attention”.*

Page 416 – **Shma Koleinu** – Hear our voice. This piyut of very ancient origin begs G-d to spare us, and is recited as a desperate man begging for his life.

Page 418 – **Ki Anu Amecha** – For we are your people, and You are our G-d! This piyut is sung joyfully, reminding G-d, as it were, that we have a special relationship with Him, and we are confident in His positive judgment of us.

Page 418- 426 – **Viduy** – see Ma'ariv

Page 436-438 – **Avinu Malkeinu** – see Ma'ariv

Removal of the Torah from the Ark - page 440

Whenever we remove the Torah on Shabbat and Holidays, we recite the Shma Yisrael. The Torah is the vibrancy of our very souls, and it is therefore fitting that we should recite the credo of our religion.



Morning Torah Reading- page 452

The Torah reading on Yom Kippur is taken from Leviticus chapter 15, and describes the preparations required of the High Priest for entrance to the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur. According to many sources, the High Priest Aaron could enter there any time he wished, so long as he would perform the necessary service. Any other of his descendants were restricted to Yom Kippur day. The Holy of Holies was a small chamber in the Temple of 10x10 cubits and contained the Holy Ark as depicted in the drawing above. According to tradition, the spot upon which the ark rested was the famous “Even Shtiya,” or foundation stone, from which G-d created the entire world.

The question which must be asked is why is a Temple necessary? After all, doesn't G-d's presence fill the entire world? Indeed, on Yom Kippur itself, we recite Psalm 24, which opens, “To G-d is the land entire, the cosmos and all her inhabitants.” Why, then, the designation? According to our sages, had the people not sinned before G-d with the Golden-Calf, there would indeed have been no need, for G-d's presence would dwell in the hearts of each and every individual. Once the people sinned, though, the situation changed dramatically. Man had demonstrated that he was incapable of sustaining the intense holiness of G-d within his heart wherever he went. One small room upon one small mountain was chosen, and only then once a year, and through one individual, and only for a few brief moments. At that moment G-d entered the hearts of each and every Jew.

Haftora - page 462

In our Haftora the prophet Isaiah chastises the people for their misunderstanding of how to achieve true repentance. G-d does not want the people to afflict themselves for no purpose. The true meaning of repentance is giving charity to the poor, observance of the mitzvot and specifically the observance of Shabbat. By observing Shabbat, one demonstrates one's absolute reliance on G-d, Who is the ultimate provider for all mankind's needs.

Yizkor

Yom Kippur is the one time a year in which an individual really takes stock of his or her life. Why was I born? What have I accomplished? How have I made this world a better place? At Yizkor these questions



become more salient. When we record the memories of our loved ones, we are ourselves confronted with our own mortality. How do I know that I am leading a good life?

At Yizkor we conjure up the memories of our parents, all of our beloved family members who have predeceased us, and all those whose unconditional love is still as fresh today as it was when they were physically living among us.

Z'chor- Remember!

On Yom Kippur day 5733, October 6th 1973, at approximately 10:00 AM, the State of Israel was caught off-guard and attacked by both the Egyptian and Syrian armies. In the end 2,569 Israeli soldiers were killed, and from that day forward the very meaning of Yom Kippur, in the State of Israel, changed forever. Let all of us take some time to remember the sacrifices of so many young men who gave their lives, "Al Kiddush Hashem Ha'am V'Ha'Aretz," For the sanctification of G-d's name, for the nation, and the Land of Israel!

Hineni

This famous prayer is recited by the Chazan as a "reshut," or an "asking of permission," to lead the Mussaf services, not from the community but from G-d. Why, suddenly, does the Chazan need to ask permission? In the days of the 2nd Temple, it was very difficult to find proper High Priests. Indeed, it often happened that the High Priest belonged to one of the many sects of Judaism at the time (i.e. Sadducees, Boethusians, etc.). When they would not perform the Yom Kippur service as stipulated by the Rabbis, they would suddenly die in the midst of their work and need to be dragged out of the Holy of Holies. This happened so often that it became necessary to tie a rope around the leg of the Kohen Gadol, when he entered the Holy of Holies.

Perhaps this is the reason why the Chazan, who today takes the place of the Kohen Gadol, asks his permission.

וּפְשַׁעֵינוּ תְּכַסֶּה בְּאַהֲבָה וְכָל
צָרוֹת וְרַעוֹת הַפֶּה נָא לָנוּ וּלְכָל
יִשְׂרָאֵל לְשָׁשׂוֹן וּלְשִׂמְחָה לְחַיִּים
וּלְשָׁלוֹם וְהַאֲמַת וְהַשְׁלוֹם אָהָבוּ
וְאֵל יְהִי שׁוֹם מְכַשׁוֹל בְּתַפְלָתִי

Mussaf

Mussaf i - Silent Amida - page 486

The Mussaf of Yom Kippur consists of the seven blessings which are included in all of the other Amidot of the day, plus an additional prayer which poignantly requests of G-d that he rebuild the sanctuary of Jerusalem and all the beautiful services that were conducted therein. The prayer concludes with the blessing "King of all the world, who sanctifies Israel, and the day of Yom Kippur." The rest of the Amida continues along its normal course including the Slichot and Viduy mentioned above.



Mussaf ii-Repetition of the Amida-pg. 502

Unesaneh Tokef- “Let us express the sanctity of the day”-pg. 530



Probably the most significant of all the High Holiday Piyutim, **Unesaneh Tokef** gives voice to our most profound and innermost feelings of the day. The details of how it was penned, and under what unusual circumstances, are nothing short of amazing; yet at the same time it encapsulates the history of the Jewish people throughout our bitter exile. The story first appears in the thirteenth century work of Rabbi Yitzchok Or –Zarua. A certain Rabbi Amnon was the court Jew of a certain German prince. The royal entourage at court was most impressed by the Rabbi’s many talents, and they continually begged him to convert, but the Rabbi always managed to sustain his Jewish faith. On one occasion, a few days before Rosh Hashana, the prince himself threatened him, practically forcing him against his will to undergo baptism. Rabbi Amnon asked for, and was granted, three days to consider the matter. Upon returning home he recognized his great sin, for he gave the impression that he might be willing to exchange his cherished legacy for dross. After the three-day period he did not show up, and he was forced to appear before the prince. He was punished by having his hands and legs cut off. On Rosh Hashana he asked to be carried to the bima of the synagogue, right before the Kedusha prayer, and he recited a piyut which had come to him with an unearthly inspiration. No sooner had he finished the prayer than he died.

Three days later, he appeared to Rabbi Kalonymus ben Meshulam in a dream, and he taught him the piyut. Upon awakening, Rabbi Kalonymus quickly jotted it down and publicized it for all posterity of the people of Israel.

The piyut describes how the entire angelic cosmos trembles when it hears the shofar sounds of the day of Judgment, and that on this day it is inscribed before G-d who will live, and who will....

The piyut ends on a contrasting joyous note when the congregation shouts out, “And repentance, and prayer, and charity, will nullify the bad decree!!”

Kedusha-pg 534

The Netaneh Tokef addition actually serves as an introduction to the standard recital of Kedusha. Unlike the rest of the year, the Kedusha of Yom Kippur begins with the words “Kakatu” as, after Untetaneh Tokef, all other introductions are moot. The Kedusha relies on the verses of Isaiah and Ezekial which describe the angelic experience of the divine and include the famous verse of the Shma. Why is Shma recited here? During the early Babylonian persecutions, the Jews were prohibited from reciting the Shma in its proper time. It seems that the Babylonians understood quite well how the Jews value that prayer. Policemen were sent to the synagogues in order to enforce the law, but they would usually tire of the very long Jewish service and leave after the reading of the Torah. The rabbis therefore instituted that the Shma be recited for the Kedusha, when it was “safe.” Even after the abolishment of the terrible decree, the people continued the beautiful practice.

V'chol Ma'aminim- and we all Believe!!



Immediately after Nesaneh Tokef and the Kedusha prayer, we sing a beautiful piyut called V'chol Ma'aminim – "We all certify, and believe." It is a series of phrases describing the merciful nature of G-d. "We all believe that he remembers his covenant, and He will grant life to all living things." His hands are always open to the sincere penitent, and He will never abandon us!" The verses follow the alphabet, in the form of aleph bet, bet gimmel, gimmel dalet, etc.

On both Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, it is customary to bow down to the floor when reciting the Aleinu prayer when it says, "And we bend and bow and give thanks before the King of Kings, The Holy, blessed be his name." In keeping with Jewish law when one does this, one must make sure that one places a sheet or towel on the floor so as not to bow down on a bare floor. The Torah allows us to bow down in this fashion only on the Temple Mt. On the Temple Mt. one also stretched himself out on the floor as in a diving position. Today, we curl up, so as not to forget that we are still in exile, and are unable to fulfill the Temple services exactly as was done then. May we speedily be worthy of the coming of Moshiach Amen.

Aleinu-pg 550

Aleinu, which is normally recited at the end of every prayer service including Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, takes a front and center role during all Mussaf services of the High Holiday season. It affirms our faith in monotheism and the unity of G-d. It also affirms that G-d is the creator of *all* of humanity, not just us. During the High Holidays we dramatically bow down on the ground to demonstrate our unwavering belief in G-d and his Will. Aleinu expresses our deepest desire that one day soon G-d will be recognized by all of mankind and peace will reign over all the earth.

AMITZ KOACH-page 554

Amitz Koach, "Oh courageously strong," is a slichah, or penitential prayer, which is recognized as the central theme of the day. When Abraham was visited by G-d at the covenant of the betarim, G-d revealed to him the entire future of all his descendents until the end of time. The Medrash explains that Abraham asked G-d, "With which mitzvah will my children deserve the Land of Israel?" G-d responded, "In the merit of the sacrifices which they will bring in my Temple." Abraham then asked, "All is well and good when the Temple will be extant, but what will happen after it is destroyed?" G-d answered, "Just because my Temple is destroyed, shall my service be interrupted? Rather let them study the Torah of the sacrifices, and the laws applying to them, and I will consider them as if they physically brought them. He who reads the Torah of the Chatat (Sin offering) is considered as if he brought the sin offering. He who reads the Torah of the Shlamim (peace offering) is considered as if he brought the peace



offering”. As the verse says, “And they will make up the oxen (sacrifices) with their lips.”

Amitz Koach is therefore of major importance on Yom Kippur. The slichah takes us from the creation of the universe and all through Jewish history until Yom Kippur as it was practiced in the Temple. It is based on the detailed descriptions found in the Mishna (tractate Yoma) and the Talmud.

It is recommended that you follow the translated texts in the Machzor to truly understand the content of this important study.

ELEH EZKARA - “These I do recall” - PG. 586

This Slichah briefly tells the story of the Ten Martyrs, or the ten great rabbis who were killed for G-d’s name’s sake. Their story appears in our liturgy twice a year, once on Yom Kippur and once on Tisha B’Av. All of these rabbis were brutally murdered by the Romans, and we record them today in order that G-d remember their sacrifice and save their descendents on their account. According to tradition the death of the righteous serves as a “Kappara” or expiation for the nation in general. The story of the Ten Martyrs is also a way in which our people come to grips with trying to understand the unfathomable. Why do the good suffer, why do bad things happen to good people? The answer, ultimately, is that it is G-d’s inscrutable decree, and are exceptions to the normal state of things. Eventually, good will triumph over evil, and perhaps the answers will unfold during the messianic era.



BIRKAT KOHANIM-THE BLESSING OF THE KOHANIM-PG. 614

Every day in the Temple the Kohanim or regular priest would bless the nation. The Torah tells us that G-d chose Aharon and his descendents to be the vehicles through which the people should be blessed. The blessings are not dependent on the Temple and could be performed in any synagogue. Sfaradic practice adopts the daily blessing of the Kohanim in their service. However, the Ashkenazim do not. They feel that the main ingredient for a blessing to be fulfilled is lacking in the exile, namely happiness! The Jewish soul



can only be authentically happy either in the Land of Israel or during Jewish holidays. We only employ these blessing on Pesach, Shavout, Sukkot, R.H., and Yom Kippur. The question is why a day of fasting and crying like Yom Kippur is considered appropriate for these blessings. The answer is that although we are physically uncomfortable, our soul is overjoyed at the prospect of being cleansed of all of its sins! For the soul Yom Kippur is the happiest day of the year!! It is customary for children to go under their father’s talit during the blessings, with the father placing his hands on them.

Hayom, Hayom, Hayom

The Mussaf concludes with a rousing song called Hayom Teamtzeinu – Today! Strengthen us!! Life and its responsibilities at times can appear overwhelming. So much is expected of us, and our responsibilities seem unending. That’s why the Torah asks us to live life one day at a time. We should consider each and

every day as if it was the day we were born. The past, with its mistakes and failures, is gone, and we must not become quagmired in its clutches. Rather, we must live for today for the sake of our future, for the sake of tomorrow. May G-d give us strength – Today, May He support us – Today, May He bless us with only goodness, and happiness. Amen!

Mincha - Afternoon Service - pg. 626

Mincha is the fourth service of the day, and begins with the removal of the Torah from the Ark (see box).

Normally, Mincha begins with the recitation of Psalm 145, commonly known as “Ashrei.” The Talmud tells us that whomsoever says Ashrei three times a day is guaranteed a share in the world to come (Berachot 4b). Therefore, Ashrei is traditionally recited twice during shacharit and once before Mincha. On Yom Kippur the third Ashrei is recited right before Neilah in order to proximate this important mitzvah to most important service of the day.



Torah Reading-pg. 630

The Torah reading for Mincha begins where the morning reading left off. The Torah gives us a list of the prohibited marriages in Judaism. The reason why this is appropriate to Yom Kippur is because marriage in Jewish tradition is called “Kiddushin” or “Sanctity.” A Jewish marriage can succeed only if G-d is in the picture. Only when a young couple marries “According to the laws of Moses and Israel” can they be confident that they will build a trustworthy house in Israel, and that their children will follow in their footsteps.

Haftorah- pg.634

The beautiful book of Yonah, from the Bible, is read in its entirety at this time. The story is well known by children and adults alike. Yonah, a disgruntled prophet attempts to flee G-d’s command to prophesy against the city of Ninveh by fleeing to Tarshish. In the midst of the sea a tempest awakens and threatens to destroy the ship. Yonah, knowing full well whose fault this is, agrees to jump in the sea in order to calm it. Once in the water, he is swallowed up by a large fish. For three days and nights he prays, begging G-d’s forgiveness and he finally is spewed out onto dry land. In the end, he fulfills his mission and the city of Ninveh is saved.

The Book of Jonah- What is the moral of the story?

The Chafetz Chaim offers a Kabbalistic twist on this enigmatic story. Man, he claims, is put on this earth to fulfill a mission in life. He must discover his mission on his own, and fulfill it with G-d’s help. G-d is ready to offer him all the help He can, so long as he is sensitive to His messages and truly desires to fulfill his mission. However, if he refuses, and



dies before having completed it, he must return, just as Yonah did, to this life, until he succeeds. He concludes that we should make every effort to live a Torah lifestyle and be spared that end.

Avinu Malkeinu-page 700- see Ma'ariv

NEILAH-THE CLOSING OF THE GATES-page 706

Neilah is the fifth and final service of the day. It is also the most solemn of all the prayers of Yom Kippur. In the Netaneh Tokef prayer we proclaim that G-d inscribe us in the appropriate book on Rosh Hashana, and seals it on Yom Kippur. What that means is that even if, Heaven forbid, a person's decree is not good, he can still work on it and change it until Yom Kippur. Neilah, therefore, is our final chance. It begins with Ashrei (see Mincha) and is recited at the time that the sun is still in the sky, right before sunset. Our custom is to stand for the entire service, but this is only voluntary. If for any reason you have difficulty standing, you may be seated.



The Amida for Neila, has slight changes from the other Amidot of the day. The expressions of "inscribe" us in the book of life are now changed to "seal" us, etc., as this is the time in which we receive our respective "sentences." Also, instead of reciting the viduy of Al Chet (see Ma'ariv), a beautiful prayer called Atah Noten (page 720) is substituted, and is a final appeal for forgiveness. Ultimately, G-d wants our repentance and He awaits our return with divine patience.

Slichot-page 736

After the Chazan repeats the main section of the Amida, he begins to recite a series of seven mini "Slichot," or penitential prayers. Each of these prayers is followed by the 13 attributes of divine mercy discussed above (see Ma'ariv).

Avinu Malkeinu – page 758 – See Ma'ariv above. Also please note the change in the wording from "Kosveinu" to "Chosmeinu."

Shema Yisroel – bottom of page 762

The Yom Kippur service concludes with a rousing recital of Shema Yisroel, Baruch Shem (recited three times), and G-d is our L-rd!! (recited seven times in succession). One should imagine that the Holy presence of G-d, which sojourned amongst us for the entire Yom Kippur, is now ascending through the seven heavens and returning to his heavenly abode. It is customary at this point to mentally accept upon yourself one mitzvah whose performance you will excel in for the coming New Year!

Kaddish is now recited, and the Shofar is sounded. All sing in unison.



“Leshana Haba’ah BiYerushalayim”- Next Year In Jerusalem!!

Thank you for taking the time to read through this guidebook, May G-d bless you with a sweet New Year, and please feel free to send any comments to ravkelmanlynn@gmail.com.

Shana Tova

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