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5786

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American  
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JVP

# Rosh haShanah Ritual Guide

## 5786/2025

Rosh haShanah, the Jewish New Year, reminds us that it is our responsibility to take note of our actions, and to start with ourselves when looking at how to fix the broken world we inhabit. As we draw close to the end of the second year of genocide in Gaza, we take this opportunity to reflect on where we've been, where we are, and where we are going.

This Rosh haShanah Ritual Guide is intended for JVP formations to use as fits each unique circumstance-in some cases all of the Guide, in others at different points and with only some of its pieces. Traditional liturgies are based on time of day, but formations may do this ritual at any time during the Days of Awe, the ten days starting with Rosh haShanah and ending with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

Please note that English God language in this guide shifts throughout, while the Hebrew remains traditional, in order to reflect the wide breadth of approaches to God that exist in our community. The prayers of Jewish tradition are poetry. All of the language is metaphor geared towards evoking feelings, rather than declarations of faith or belief.

We suggest creating thoughtful settings for such a ritual. Note the lighting, the scent, the set up of chairs or lack thereof. It can be around a table, or with an empty space in the middle. Make sure all who are invited feel prepared to understand what they are joining. Allow people to engage as they feel comfortable, going around the room reading as the "leader" in turn, or having a single leader read while others respond or join in on conversational pieces.

The American Council for Judaism (ACJ) is renewing its historic commitment to Judaism as a path of universal ethics and justice by cultivating communities of Jewish spiritual practice beyond nationalism. We are partnering with organizations like JVP to resource, strengthen, and expand liberatory forms of Jewish communal and ritual life. Learn more and join our mailing list at <http://www.acjna.org>

# Opening Blessing and Poem

And We Live On . . . May 27, 2012

Refaat Alareer, *If I Must Die*, (pp. 82-83)

And another day in Gaza  
Another day in Palestine  
A day in prison  
And we live on  
Despite Israel's very much identified  
flying objects  
That we see more than our family and friends  
And despite Israel's death sentences  
Like lead  
Cast upon the head  
As we sleep  
Like acid rain  
Gnawing at our life  
Clinging to it like a flea to a kitten  
And stuffed in our throats  
The moment we say "Amen"  
To the prayers of old women and men  
Despite Israel's birds of death  
Hovering only two meters from our breath  
From our dreams and prayers  
Blocking their ways to God.  
Despite that.  
We dream and pray,  
Clinging to life even harder  
Every time a dear one's life  
Is forcibly rooted up.  
We live.  
We live.  
We do.

# Candle Lighting

Candle lighting is a ritual tradition used to mark the transition from profane to sacred time, usually done at the evening beginning of a holiday. The act of lighting the candle is an act of creation. By combining a flame with a candle, a new flame is created without lessening the original source. It shines on of its own accord. This ritual reminds us that at every turn, we have the opportunity to be that light for someone else, whether it is by sharing words of encouragement and compassion for a loved one who is struggling, or demanding the world attend to the ongoing crimes against the Palestinian people, each action we take can light a new flame that will ignite many more.

“The rabbi of Rizhyn said: ‘When a [person] walks through the woods on a dark night, and for a time another joins, lantern in hand, but at the crossroads they part and the first must grope the way on alone. But if a [person] carries [their] own light one need not be afraid of any darkness.’”

Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim*

|                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה         | <i>Baruch atah Adonai</i>        |
| אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,    | <i>eloheinu melech ha'olam,</i>  |
| אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ             | <i>asher kidshanu</i>            |
| בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ      | <i>b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu</i>     |
| לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב: | <i>l'hadlik ner shel yom tov</i> |

Blessed are you, Adonai, Sovereign of the Universe, who has hallowed us with *mitzvot* and has given us the opportunity to light the candles of our holiday..

This contemporary blessing written by Alina Fox is an additional possibility for grounding your candle lighting in justice, and using Judaism to inspire your climb towards a world of liberation.

|                                               |                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| נִבְרָךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הַחַיִּים לְהַדְלִיק נֵר | <i>Nevareich et ein ha-chayim, lehadlik ner</i> |
| שֶׁל צֶדֶק וְשִׁכָּחָה לוֹ בְּעוֹלָמוֹ        | <i>shel tzedek, veshekacha le-ah be-olamoh.</i> |

We bless the Source of Life, who makes sacred these flames for justice, and our capacity to practice the world

# Kiddush (Blessing over Wine or Juice)

The blessing over the wine speaks to Jewish self-understanding: Our mythological history roots us in the story of the Exodus from Egypt-of a tale of oppression to liberation. And, as the blessing tells us, it is our job to make known that this is God's will: For all shackles to be broken; for all oppression to end; for the liberation of all people. Rosh haShanah provides us the opportunity to reflect on how we, in our place and time, are best positioned to bring this into the world; and, with a glass of wine, to open our minds to new possibilities of how we may enact our responsibility.

|                                                    |                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ                              | <i>Baruch atah Adonai</i>                           |
| אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם                         | <i>Eloheinu Melech ha'olam</i>                      |
| בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן                             | <i>borei p'ri hagafen</i>                           |
| בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, | <i>Baruch atah, Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam,</i> |
| אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר-בָּנוּ עִם כָּל עַם, וְרוֹמְמָנוּ    | <i>asher bachar-banu im kol am, v'rom'manu</i>      |
| עִם כָּל לָשׁוֹן, וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו.     | <i>im kol lashon, v'kid'shanu b'mitzvotav.</i>      |
| וַתִּתֶּן-לָנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,                  | <i>Vatiten-lanu, Adonai Eloheinu,</i>               |
| בְּאַהֲבָה אֶת יוֹם הַזִּכְרוֹן הַזֶּה,            | <i>b'ahavah et Yom HaZikaron hazeh,</i>             |
| יוֹם תְּרוּעָה, מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ,                    | <i>yom t'ruah, mikra-kodesh,</i>                    |
| זֵכֶר לִיצִיַּאת מִצְרַיִם.                        | <i>zeicher litziat Mitzrayim.</i>                   |
| כִּי בָנוּ בְּחֵרְתָּ, וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ      | <i>Ki vanu vacharta, v'otanu kidashta</i>           |
| עִם כָּל הָעַמִּים וּדְבַרְךָ אֱמֶת וְקָיָם לָעַד. | <i>im kol haamim; udvar'cha emet v'kayam laad.</i>  |
| בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ,    | <i>Baruch atah, Adonai, melech al kol haaretz,</i>  |
| מְקֹדֵשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיוֹם הַזִּכְרוֹן.            | <i>m'kadeish Yisrael v'Yom HaZikaron.</i>           |

Blessed are you, Adonai, Eternal Sovereign, creator of the fruit of the vine.  
Blessed are you, Adonai, Eternal Sovereign, You chose us to make known Your aspirations among all the many peoples, providing us sacred practices.

In Your love, Eternal our God, You have given us this Day of Remembrance: a day for the shofar's joyful sound; a day of sacred assembly; a day to recall the going-out from Egypt. A unique, sacred role among cultures You have chosen for us — and Your word is true; it endures forever.

Blessed are You, Eternal Sovereign over all the earth, who sanctifies us and the Day of Remembrance.

# A Call to Prayer

As we gather tonight to welcome the Jewish New Year, we also remember that we are called together to unite in action against the ongoing genocide in Palestine, as well as the rising fascism in the United States. Standing and praising God as a collective is not about declaring belief in an all-powerful man in the sky-it is about declaring belief in solidarity; that, together, we can bring about a world of justice, peace, and shared prosperity when we combine our efforts while staying rooted in the values of our tradition.

בְּרַחוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ. *Bar'chu et Adonai ham'vorach.*

בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. *Baruch Adonai ham'vorach l'olam va-ed.*

Praise the Divine to whom all praise is due!

Let us praise the Divine to whom all praise is due now and forever.

## Shema & V'ahavta

The central prayer of Jewish tradition reminds us that all humanity is unified - that the power we worship in the world isn't one of division, or one of might making right, but instead of the unity of all Being. In reminding ourselves that all is One, we assert that any person suffering, starving, or being harmed is an equal tragedy. We affirm that any act of harm against Palestinians, or against those in solidarity with them, is a betrayal of our values. Our faith and our tradition insists that God dwells in every living being. We must use our minds, our hands, and our hearts to fight for the equality and liberation of all people.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד. *Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai echad.*

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. *Baruch sheim k'vod malchuto l'olam va-ed.*

Listen, Those Who Struggle with God: Adonai is our Supreme Being, Adonai is One.

Let us praise the Glorious Name, sovereign forever and ever.

# Shema & V'ahavta

|                                                         |                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לֵבְבְּךָ       | <i>V'ahavta eit Adonai Elohecha b'chol l'vav'cha</i>   |
| ובְּכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ ובְּכָל-מְאֹדְךָ.                     | <i>uvchol nafsh'cha uvchol m'odecha.</i>               |
| וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי             | <i>V'hayu had'varim ha-eileh asher anochi</i>          |
| מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם עַל-לֵבְבְּךָ.                        | <i>m'tzav'cha hayom al l'vavecha.</i>                  |
| וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ | <i>V'shinantam l'vanecha v'dibarta bam b'shivt'cha</i> |
| בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ                     | <i>b'veitecha uvlecht'cha vaderech uvshoch-b'cha</i>   |
| ובְּשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ.                             | <i>uvkumecha.</i>                                      |
| וְקִשַּׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל-זִידְךָ                       | <i>Ukshartam l'ot al yadecha</i>                       |
| וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ.                       | <i>v'hayu l'totafot bein einecha.</i>                  |
| וְכַתַּבְתָּם עַל-מְזֻזֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ.      | <i>Uchtavtam al m'zuzot beitecha uvish-arecha.</i>     |
| לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹתַי      | <i>L'ma-an tizk'ru va-asitem et kol mitzvotai</i>      |
| וְהָיִיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם.                      | <i>vih-yitem k'doshim leiloheichem.</i>                |
| אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי                | <i>Ani Adonai Eloheichem asher hotzeiti etchem</i>     |
| אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לִהְיוֹת לָכֶם                | <i>mei-eretz mitzrayim lihyot lachem leilohim, Ani</i> |
| לֵאלֹהִים אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.                      | <i>Adonai Eloheichem.</i>                              |

You shall love Adonai, your Supreme Being, with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your might.

And these words, which I offer you on this day,  
shall be upon your heart.

Repeat them to your children, and speak them when you are sitting in your house, when you are walking on the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Guide your hand by them, and they will direct your eyes.

Write them upon the doorposts of your house and gates:  
that you remember and enact all My guidance,  
and be holy unto your Supreme Being.

I, Adonai, am your Supreme Being, who led you out of Egypt to be your Supreme Being; I, Adonai, am your Supreme Being!

# Shema & V'ahavta

## V'ahavta by Aurora Levins Morales

Say these words when you lie down and when you rise up,  
when you go out and when you return. In times of mourning  
and in times of joy. Inscribe them on your doorposts,  
embroider them on your garments, tattoo them on your shoulders,  
teach them to your children, your neighbors, your enemies,  
recite them in your sleep, here in the cruel shadow of empire:  
Another world is possible.

Thus spoke the prophet Roque Dalton:  
All together they have more death than we,  
but all together, we have more life than they.  
There is more bloody death in their hands  
than we could ever wield, unless  
we lay down our souls to become them,  
and then we will lose everything. So instead,  
imagine winning. This is your sacred task.  
This is your power. Imagine  
every detail of winning, the exact smell of the summer streets  
in which no one has been shot, the muscles you have never  
unclenched from worry, gone soft as newborn skin,  
the sparkling taste of food when we know  
that no one on earth is hungry, that the beggars are fed,  
that the old man under the bridge and the woman  
wrapping herself in thin sheets in the back seat of a car,  
and the children who suck on stones,  
nest under a flock of roofs that keep multiplying their shelter.  
Lean with all your being towards that day  
when the poor of the world shake down a rain of good fortune  
out of the heavy clouds, and justice rolls down like waters.

# Shema & V'ahavta

*V'ahavta by Aurora Levins Morales ctd.*

Defend the world in which we win as if it were your child.

It is your child.

Defend it as if it were your lover.

It is your lover.

When you inhale and when you exhale  
breathe the possibility of another world  
into the 37.2 trillion cells of your body  
until it shines with hope.

Then imagine more.

Imagine rape is unimaginable. Imagine war is a scarcely credible rumor  
That the crimes of our age, the grotesque inhumanities of greed,  
the sheer and astounding shamelessness of it, the vast fortunes  
made by stealing lives, the horrible normalcy it came to have,  
is unimaginable to our heirs, the generations of the free.

Don't waver. Don't let despair sink its sharp teeth  
Into the throat with which you sing. Escalate your dreams.  
Make them burn so fiercely that you can follow them down  
any dark alleyway of history and not lose your way.

Make them burn clear as a starry drinking gourd  
Over the grim fog of exhaustion, and keep walking.

Hold hands. Share water. Keep imagining.  
So that we, and the children of our children's children  
may live

*Support Aurora's work at [www.patreon.com/auroralevinsmorales](http://www.patreon.com/auroralevinsmorales)*

# Mi Camocha

The Torah recounts the story of the Israelites and their comrades in the mixed multitude escaping Egypt through a miracle: The sea parted before them as they fled from Pharaoh's armies. Today, we watch in horror and dread as Israel acts as Pharaoh, refusing to allow the Palestinians of Gaza to be free; enforcing starvation; massacring thousands; cruelly ignoring calls for mercy from around the world. This prayer, said twice a day, reminds those who use it that even when things are at their most dire, a new way may appear. This prayer reminds us to maintain our hope in the future, even when only a miracle might save us. We pray today for just such a miracle for the Palestinians of Gaza and the West Bank-a miracle in which the horrors of genocide and apartheid are made to part, allowing freedom for all people.

|                                             |                                              |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| מִי־כַמֹּכָה בְּאֵלִים יְהוָה?              | <i>Mi chamocha ba-eilim Adonai?</i>          |
| מִי כַמֹּכָה נֶאֱדָר בְּקֹדֶשׁ,             | <i>Mi kamocha nedar bakodesh,</i>            |
| נֹרָא תְהִלַּת, עֲשֵׂה פֶלֶא?               | <i>nora t'hilot, osei fele?</i>              |
| שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה שִׁבְּחוּ גְאוּלִּים       | <i>Shira chadasha shib'chu g'ulim</i>        |
| לְשִׁמְחָה עַל שְׁפַת הַיָּם.               | <i>l'shimcha al s'fat hayam.</i>             |
| יַחַד כָּלֵם הוֹדוּ וְהִמְלִיכוּ וְאָמְרוּ: | <i>Yachad kulam hodu v'himlichu v'am'ru:</i> |
| יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.             | <i>Adonai yim-loch l'olam va-ed.</i>         |
| בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, גָּאֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל.    | <i>Baruch ata Adonai, ga-al Yisrael.</i>     |

Who is like You, Eternal One? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, awe-inspiring, working wonders? Our liberated people sang a new song. They proclaimed Your sovereignty and said:

“The Eternal God shall reign forever and ever!”

Blessed are you, Adonai, who redeems Those Who Wrestle with God.

# Mi Camocha

*Songs at the Sea, Rabbi Brant Rosen, 2018*

As the waters parted before them  
they sang their songs of praise:  
Some sang to the one who  
shattered Pharaoh's army  
with a mighty right hand,  
some sang to the god of their ancestors  
who remained faithful to them  
and them alone.

Others sang to the one  
who redeems the oppressed  
so that the world may know of his might:  
who is like you god of war,  
consuming the enemy like straw  
incinerated with one awesome  
mighty blast from on high?  
Some sang a hymn of praise  
to the god of vengeance,  
who shamed the Egyptians  
hurling them all like stones  
into the heart of the churning sea;  
still others sang out with hope  
that the peoples of the land  
they were promised  
would now melt away  
as god's people went forth  
to dispossess them.

As they marched on  
their voices joined into one feverish song;  
a tuneless wordless howl  
that echoed on and on  
before finally disappearing  
somewhere in the deep.

# Amida – Silent Prayer

We now take a moment to turn inside, with guidance from our tradition. The following chart provides the themes of the traditional Rosh haShanah Amida as a point of reflection for your own inner thoughts and prayers; use them to guide your mind's eye towards a future worth fighting for, and to provide you with deep rootedness to continue doing so.

Each of these names of God are to be wrestled with as metaphors; the familiarity or discomfort they evoke is the name Speaking to you-listen, fight, demand, feel, and then, understand.

| Blessed are you, Adonai...                          | <i>Baruch atah adonai...</i>                  | ברוך אתה<br>...יהוה          |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Who shielded our ancestors                       | <i>Magein Avraham v'ezrat Sarah.</i>          | מגן אברהם<br>ועזרת שרה.      |
| 1a. Who Remembers, and inscribes us for Life        | <i>Zochreinu l'Chayim</i>                     | זכרנו לחיים.                 |
| 2. Who allows the dead to live on with us           | <i>M'chayeih hameitim (hacol).</i>            | מחיה המתים<br>(הכל).         |
| 3. Grant us your presence, glory, and righteousness | <i>U'vchen ten pachad, cavod, v'tzedek</i>    | ובכן תן פחד,<br>כבוד, וצדק   |
| 4. The Holy Being                                   | <i>HaEil HaKadosh</i>                         | האל הקדוש.                   |
| 5. Who alone in awe we seek to Enact.               | <i>Sh'oht'chah l'vadcha b'yira na'ah'vod.</i> | שאותך לבדך<br>ביראה נעבוד.   |
| 6. Whom it is Good to Thank                         | <i>HaTov Shimcha U'l'chah Naeh L'hodot</i>    | הטוב שמך ולך<br>נאה להודות.  |
| 7. The one who blesses Godwrestlers with Peace      | <i>HaM'vareich et Amo Yisrael Ba'Shalom</i>   | המברך את עמו<br>ישראל בשלום. |

# Avinu Malkeinu

The most poignant image and prayer of Rosh haShanah, Avinu Malkeinu asks us to think about what it means to feel in deep relationship with the Universe. Through applying the metaphor of parents and sovereign to the entirety of the Cosmos, the whole context of our lives is metaphorized into a Being we can address. As you reflect on the year, imagine what it would be like to be able to address this Totality: all of the moments that stick out to you, all of the moments in which you feel pride, all of the moments in which you feel shame, all of the confusion you carry. Avinu Malkeinu suggests we address them as an Entity, asking for forgiveness, for love, for guidance, and for salvation.

In a year in which so many of us have felt powerless to affect true change; when we have watched as the darkest nightmares that dwell within each human take shape through human action, and we often feel helpless to stop it. We have screamed and howled and thrown our bodies against the gears of the machine to try to stop it, to no avail. And yet, we pray, we hope, and we continue trying -because this living organism that is our shared Universe requires it of us, and we ask for its help and guidance.

|                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ         | <i>Avinu malkeinu</i>      |
| חֲנֹנֵנוּ וְעֲנֵנוּ        | <i>Choneinu v'aneinu</i>   |
| כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים | <i>ki ain banu ma'asim</i> |
| עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ            | <i>Aseh imanu</i>          |
| צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד            | <i>tzedakah v'chesed</i>   |
| וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ             | <i>v'hoshianu</i>          |

Our Parent, Our Sovereign  
be gracious and answer us,  
even though we are ineffectual.  
Treat us with tzedakah (righteousness)  
and chesed (loving kindness). And save us.

# Avinu Malkeinu

## The Final Message of Gazan Journalist Anas al-Sharif

This is my will and my final message. If these words reach you, know that Israel has succeeded in killing me and silencing my voice. First, peace be upon you and Allah's mercy and blessings. Together, we can defend the truth when it's under siege.

Allah knows I gave every effort and all my strength to be a support and a voice for my people, ever since I opened my eyes to life in the alleys and streets of the Jabalia refugee camp. My hope was that Allah would extend my life so I could return with my family and loved ones to our original town of occupied Asqalan (Al-Majdal). But Allah's will came first, and His decree is final. I have lived through pain in all its details, tasted suffering and loss many times, yet I never once hesitated to convey the truth as it is, without distortion or falsification — so that Allah may bear witness against those who stayed silent, those who accepted our killing, those who choked our breath, and whose hearts were unmoved by the scattered remains of our children and women, doing nothing to stop the massacre that our people have faced for more than a year and a half.

I entrust you with Palestine — the jewel in the crown of the Muslim world, the heartbeat of every free person in this world. I entrust you with its people, with its wronged and innocent children who never had the time to dream or live in safety and peace. Their pure bodies were crushed under thousands of tons of Israeli bombs and missiles, torn apart and scattered across the walls.

Make my blood a light that illuminates the path of freedom for my people and my family.

I urge you not to let chains silence you, nor borders restrain you. Be bridges toward the liberation of the land and its people, until the sun of dignity and freedom rises over our stolen homeland. I entrust you to take care of my family. I entrust you with my beloved daughter Sham, the light of my eyes, whom I never got the chance to watch grow up as I had dreamed.

# Avinu Malkeinu

*The Final Message of Gazan Journalist Anas al-Sharif ctd.*

I entrust you with my dear son Salah, whom I had wished to support and accompany through life until he grew strong enough to carry my burden and continue the mission.

I also entrust you with my lifelong companion, my beloved wife, Umm Salah (Bayan), from whom the war separated me for many long days and months. Yet she remained faithful to our bond, steadfast as the trunk of an olive tree that does not bend — patient, trusting in Allah, and carrying the responsibility in my absence with all her strength and faith.

I urge you to stand by them, to be their support after Allah Almighty. If I die, I die steadfast upon my principles. I testify before Allah that I am content with His decree, certain of meeting Him, and assured that what is with Allah is better and everlasting.

Oh Allah, accept me among the martyrs, forgive my past and future sins, and make my blood a light that illuminates the path of freedom for my people and my family. Forgive me if I have fallen short, and pray for me with mercy, for I kept my promise and never changed or betrayed it.

Do not forget Gaza... And do not forget me in your sincere prayers for forgiveness and acceptance.

# Ritual of Renewal

Rambam (Moses Maimonides), Mishneh Torah, Teshuvah 3:4

The shofar's call is saying: Wake up you sleepy ones from your sleep and you who slumber, arise. Inspect your deeds, reflect, remember your Creator. Those who forget the truth in the vanities of time and throughout the entire year, devote their energies to vanity and emptiness which will not benefit or save: Look to your souls. Improve your ways and your deeds and let every one of you abandon his evil path and thoughts.

The call of the shofar has symbolized the need to awaken to our own roles in life, and do the hard work of teshuvah/atonement to find our true moral center. Across Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the shofar is blown in four distinct ways, each with its own meaning:

*Tekiah*—A single, steady blast. It calls us to attention.

*Shevarim*—Three broken sounds. They echo the cry of the heart, expressing our grief, longing, and hope as another year passes.

*Truah*—A series of rapid, staccato notes. This is the wake-up call, shaking us out of complacency and into renewal.

*Tekiah Gedolah*—The “great blast.” A long, final note that gathers everything together and carries us forward into the year.

These sounds invite us to listen deeply, reflect on our lives, and step into the new year awake and renewed.

This Rosh haShanah, we have the opportunity to do this as a community using the following guide:

Find your Attention: Settle in; guide yourself to relaxation; breathe slowly in through your nose, and out through your mouth; Allow yourself to feel receptive and open to the call of the shofar.

Use the chart on the following page to allow the gathered to reflect on the past, root into the present, and consider what *teshuvah*, reorientations, are needed within them.

# Ritual of Renewal

To begin, call the gathering to attention with the blessing over shofar, then shofar blasts, either with a live player, or the following recording: <https://youtu.be/0loAeDGvSPw>

Then, give set amounts of time to reflect on the past, present, and future as guided below, breaking each amount of time up with the shofar blasts.

ברוך אתה יהוה  
אלהינו מלך העולם,  
אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו  
לשמע קול שופר  
*Baruch atah Adonai  
eloheinu melech ha'olam,  
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu  
lishmoa kol shofar.*

Blessed are you, Adonai our Guide, Eternal Sovereign,  
who has sanctified us with your practices,  
and given us the opportunity to hear the voice of the shofar.

| Past                                                                    | Present                                                  | Future                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Name one thing that you feel defines your (our) past year               | Name one thing that you feel defines you (us) right now. | Name one thing that you want to define your (our) future. |
| Name one thing you want to understand better from your (our) past year. | Name one thing that confuses you (us) right now.         | Name one thing you wonder about your (our) future.        |
| Name one thing that you would change about your (our) past year         | Name one thing you would change in your (our) present    | Name one thing you want to change in your (our) future    |

# Kaddish

The Mourners Kaddish is a prayer of praise for the Divine. It does not mention the dead, or remembering the dead, at all. Instead, it turns our minds and hearts towards gratitude; it reminds us that the world, the universe, is much bigger than our own loves and losses-that the Creator's Creation is one far greater than our understanding.

Simultaneously, we stand in grief today, the destruction and degradation that, too, is much larger than we can fully grasp. We invite you to spend time considering the balance of these two contradictions-the Jewish tradition of praising God, and the now-present horror at a world mutilated beyond understanding. How can we allow our tradition to lift us up and empower us through these times? How can we listen to the words of the Kaddish, and the words of the Palestinian poet Hala Alyan as we do so?

|                                                              |                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא.                    | <i>Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei raba.</i>                 |
| בְּעֻלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְּרַעוּתָהּ וְיִמְלִיךְ              | <i>B'al'ma di v'ra chir-utei, v'yamlich malchutei</i>    |
| מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל    | <i>b'chayeichon uv'yomeichon uv-chayei d'chol</i>        |
| בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב,               | <i>beit Yisrael, ba-agala uvizman kariv, v'imru:</i>     |
| וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.                                             | <i>Amein.</i>                                            |
| יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וּלְעָלְמֵי          | <i>Y'hei sh'mei raba m'vorach l'alam ulal'mei</i>        |
| עָלְמֵינָא.                                                  | <i>almaya.</i>                                           |
| יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם         | <i>Yitbarach v'yishtabach v'yitpa-ar v'yit-romam</i>     |
| וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלָּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ | <i>v'yitnasei v'yit-hadar v'yit-aleh v'yit-halal,</i>    |
| דְּקֻדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא.                                  | <i>sh'mei d'kud'sha, b'rich hu.</i>                      |
| לְעָלְמָא מִן כָּל בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא,                   | <i>Leila min kol birchata v'shirata, tush-b'chata</i>    |
| תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנִחְמָתָא, וְאָמְרוּ בְּעֻלְמָא,            | <i>v'nechemata, da-amiran balma, v'imru:</i>             |
| וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.                                             | <i>Amein.</i>                                            |
| יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ       | <i>Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya v'chayim</i>           |
| וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.                      | <i>aleinu v'al kol Yisrael, v'imru: Amein.</i>           |
| עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם           | <i>O-seh sha-lom bim-ro-mav, hu ya-a-seh sha-</i>        |
| עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְעַל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֶל        | <i>lom a-lei-nu v'al kol Yisrael, v'al yoshvei tevel</i> |
| וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.                                             | <i>v'im-ru: A-mein.</i>                                  |

# Kaddish

Let the glory of God be extolled. May God's greatness be revered in the world whose creation God willed. May God's dominion soon prevail, in our own day, in our own lives, and in the life of all of the House of Those Who Struggle with God, and let us say: Amen.

Let God's greatness be praised forever and ever. Let the Holy One be glorified, exalted, and honored, though God is beyond all praises, songs, and adorations that we can speak. And let us say: Amen.

For Those Who Struggle with God and for all people, may the blessing of peace and the promise of life, come true, and let us say: Amen.

May the One who causes peace to reign in the high heavens let peace descend on us, on all Those Who Struggle with God, and on all inhabitants of the world, and let us say: Amen.

Hala Alyan, "Revision," in Guernica Magazine

I don't mean to hate the sparrows.  
I don't mean to close my eyes and see fire, a flood of concrete,  
leaflets the size of grotesque snow.  
I don't mean to rehearse evacuation that isn't mine:  
from the grocery store to the house, from the house to the river,  
from the river to the airport. Here are the rules.  
There is a road and it's gone now.  
There is a sea and you can't drink its water.  
How far can you carry a toddler? A middle-aged dog?  
How far can you go in sixty-five seconds? Eleven?  
If you have a favorite flower, now's the time to redact it.  
If you have a mother, now's the time to move her to the basement.  
If you don't have a basement?  
I don't mean to profit from this poem but I do.  
I don't mean to say I but I do. Here are the rules.  
The rules are redacted.

# Kaddish

*Hala Alyan, "Revision," ctd.*

[ ] is [ ].

[ ] is a red herring.

[ ] is a billboard with 583 names.

Here are the rules.

I had a grandmother once.

She had a memory once.

It spoiled like milk.

On the phone, she'd me ask about my son, if he was fussy,  
if he was eating solids yet.

She'd ask if he was living up to his name.

I said yes. I always said yes. I asked for his name and it was [ ].

I dreamt of her saying:

[ ]

[ ]

[ ].

How deep in the earth can you burrow with your four hearts? Here are the rules:

There is no bomb shelter. There is no ship.

You can leave. Why aren't you leaving?

You can resist. Why aren't you resisting?

On the phone, my grandmother would call me her heart.

Her soul. Her two God-given eyes.

She'd ask if I wanted to visit Palestine again.

I never brought her back any soil, but she liked one story,  
so I'd tell it again, about the man I met at the

bus station, a stranger until he spoke Arabic,

calling me sister and daughter and sister and I told her how  
he skipped work and drove me past the

gardens to the highest point and we waved to Beirut.

I waved to her, and later she said she was waving back.

Never mind her balcony faced the wrong direction.

Never mind the sea a terrible blue.

Never mind there never was a son. Here are the rules:

# Kaddish

*Hala Alyan, "Revision," ctd.*

If you say Gaza you must say [    ].

If you say [    ] you must say [    ].

Here are the rules.

If there is a microphone do not sing into it.

If there is a camera do not look it in the eye.

Here are the rules.

You can't redact a name once it's been spoken.

If you say [    ] you must say [    ].

If you say Gaza, you must say Gaza.

If you look, you must look until there is no looking left to do.

Here are the rules. Here's my mother-given name, here's my small life.

It is no more than any other. Here's my grandmother, dead for five years.

She's speaking again. She calls when I'm not expecting.

Keef ibnik, she says. Where is he now? Let me say hello.

What could I say back? He's good, I tell her.

I pretend to call a child from the other room.

I pretend to hear the sea from here. I wave back. Here are the rules:

We bear what we bear until we can't anymore.

We invent what we can't stand grieving.

The sun sets on Gaza. The sun rises on Gaza.

On your [    ].

On your blue pencils.

On your God-given eyes.

He's good, I tell her. He's good.

He's crawling. Mashallah, mashallah.

Together, we praise the sea and the son.

Together, we praise how much he's grown.

# Closing

|                                                       |                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ,      | <i>Eloheinu veilohei avoteinu v'imoteinu</i>       |
| יְהִי רָצוֹן שֶׁהֲנִיזְכָּה לְבִרְכוֹתֶיךָ            | <i>Y'hi ratzon shehnizkeh livirchotechah</i>       |
| בְּשָׁנַת חֲמִשָּׁת אֲלָפִים שְׁמוֹנִים וְשֵׁשׁ.      | <i>b'sh'nat chamishat alpayim shmonim v'shesh.</i> |
| אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם, בָּרֵךְ אוֹתָנוּ וְאֶת כָּל הָעוֹלָם  | <i>Elohei Olam, bareich otanu v'et kol ha'olam</i> |
| בְּחֵדוֹשׁ יְמֵינוּ, בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשָׁלוֹם,         | <i>b'chadesh yameinu; b'simchah u'v'shalom,</i>    |
| בְּנֶחֱמָה וְאִמָּץ לֵב.                              | <i>bin'chamah v'ometz lev.</i>                     |
| יְהִי הֶגְיוֹנֵי לִיבֵינוּ מְקַבֵּל                   | <i>Y'hi hegyonei libeinu m'kubal v'ratzui</i>      |
| וְרָצוֹי מִלְּפָנֶיךָ בִּפְרוֹס הַשָּׁנָה הַחֲדָשָׁה. | <i>milfanecha bifros hashanah hachadashah.</i>     |
| לְעַד מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ                          | <i>l'ad modim anachnu lach</i>                     |
| עַל מַתָּנוֹת הַחַיִּים וְעוֹלָם.                     | <i>al matanot hachayyim v'olam.</i>                |

Our Source and Source of our Ancestors,  
May it be your will that we merit your blessings in this year of 5786.  
Spirit of the Universe, Bless us and all the world,  
in renewing our days; in happiness and peace; in comfort and strength.  
May the meditations of our hearts be accepted and desired by you  
as this new year unfolds.  
We are forever grateful for the gifts of life, and the world.

## Blessing for Pursuing Justice

This blessing, from Fringes: a feminist, non-Zionist *havurah* in Philadelphia, guides us to move forward from this ritual moment with strength and focus on the core *mitzvah* of pursuing justice.

|                                              |                                                |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ שֶׁכִּינָה בְּתוֹכֵנוּ רוּחַ | <i>B'rucha at Shekhinah, b'tocheynu, ruach</i> |
| הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁתָנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיהָ | <i>ha'olam, asher kidshatnu b'mitzvoteyha</i>  |
| וְצִוָּתָנוּ לִרְדּוֹף צֶדֶק                 | <i>v'tzivatnu lirdof tzedek</i>                |

Blessed are you, Shekhinah, who is within us, spirit of the world, who infuses our lives with holiness and commands us to pursue justice.

