

Yom Kippur Service

A Day of Reckoning

[Leader] Today, on Yom Kippur, we are united by a common need to come together as a community. We seek to move forward into the new year as stronger, wiser, and more compassionate people.

Lighting of Candles

[Leader] We begin tonight with the lighting of candles, a simple act that connects us with our Jewish heritage, the warmth of tradition, and generations past and future.

[Light candles]

May the dancing flames of these candles kindle warmth within our hearts, wisdom in our minds, and passion in our souls.

*Ba-ruch ha-or ba-o-lam
Precious is the light within the world.*

*Ba-ruch ha-or ba-ah-dam
Precious is the light within each person*

*Ba-ruch ha-or ba-yom-tov
Precious is the light of the holiday.*

Accountability

[Reader] Yom Kippur is a time to pause and reflect. It is a time to look honestly at our values and our behavior. It is a time to plan for change and a time to make choices. May we choose our future wisely. In the words of Hillel:

If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
If I'm for myself only, what am I?
If not now, when?

[Reader] Unlike many other Jews today, we do not come together to ask god to forgive the sins we may have committed against an almighty power. But we recognize Yom Kippur as the conclusion of a period in which, we have reflected upon our behavior over the past year, a time when we have thought about where we failed ourselves and where we failed others. It is a time in which we seek forgiveness.

[Reader] We are human. We make mistakes. We pass judgment on others, we deceive ourselves and others, we make excuses, we condemn in others qualities that we, too, may exhibit.

[Reader] We may speak when we should be silent and remain silent when we should speak. We may act when we should be still and be still when we should act.

[Reader] Yom Kippur is a time to be both accountable and forgiving. While seeking forgiveness *from* others, we must also be willing to *forgive* others. And we must forgive ourselves.

Honoring our Ancestors

[Reader] We remember the good deeds of our ancestors with love, respect, and thanksgiving; their good acts inspire us. May we and future generations do honor to their name.

[Reader] We are thankful for the gift of life and the blessing of parents. From generation to generation, they are the rock of our lives, their wondrous gifts bestowed at all times.

[Reader] We are thankful for the gift of life and the blessing of children. From generation to generation, they are the rock of our lives, the joy that sustains us. May we bestow upon them our wondrous gifts, at all times.

Poem: Life's Journey

Birth is a beginning
And death is a destination.
And life is a journey:
From childhood to maturity
And youth to age;
From innocence to knowing;
From foolishness to discretion
 And then, perhaps, to wisdom;
From weakness to strength
Or strength to weakness –
 And, often, back again;
From health to sickness
 And back, we hope, to health again;
From offense to forgiveness,
From loneliness to love,
From joy to gratitude,
From pain to compassion,
And grief to understanding –
 From fear to hope;
From defeat to defeat to defeat –
Until, looking backward or ahead,
We see that victory lies
Not at some high place along the way,
But in having made the journey,
 Stage by stage.
Birth is a beginning
And death is a destination.
And life is a journey,
An awesome journey.

Humanistic Kaddish

[Leader reads; all say L'chaim] May the glory of life be extolled. L'chaim.
May the world be blessed with peace, all life hallowed by love and respect. L'chaim.
Let life be blessed, and glorified, exalted and honored. L'chaim.
For us, for the Jewish people, and for all people, may the promise and the gift of life come true. L'chaim.

May peace embrace all of us. L'chaim.
May peace be granted us, we who mourn, and be a comfort to all who are bereaved. And we say, L'chaim.

May the memory of good people be, for us, a blessing.

Blowing of the Shofar