

Yom Kippur Midday Service



Humanistic Judaism

Many of us gathered here today consider ourselves Humanistic Jews. We believe that human beings possess the power and the responsibility to shape our own lives and that our ethical and moral principles should serve human needs. We identify with the history, culture, and future of the Jewish people and are committed to the notion that the freedom and dignity of the Jewish people must go hand in hand with the freedom and dignity of every human being.

Some of us here consider themselves members of other cultural or religious groups and have joined us today for many different reasons. We welcome you here and are grateful for your presence.

Acknowledgements

Rabbi Donald Pollock, Introductory Readings 1 and 2

Judith Seid, Vidui 7

Rabbi Sherwin Wine, A Humanist Kaddish

Yehudah Amichai (translated by T. Carmi), Nizkor 6

Pavel Friedman, April 16, 1942, Terezin, Nizkor 7

Rabbi Donald Pollock, Nizkor 2

Marcia Falk (Book of Blessings), Closing Meditations 1

This service draws generously upon liturgy from the Yom Kippur services of Congregation for Humanistic Judaism of Fairfield County, CT.

Composed 2010, KB Liturgy Committee

www.kahalbraira.org



∞ MUSICAL PRELUDE ∞

∞ WELCOME ∞

∞ SHEMA ∞

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֶחָד קְהַלְנוּ
אֶנוֹשׁוֹת אַחַת

Reader and Congregation

Sh'ma Yisrael, Ekhad k'haleynu Eh-noh-shoot akhat.

Hear, oh Israel, Our community is one, Humanity is one.



∞ INTRODUCTORY READINGS ∞

1.

Reader: May this day be a day of many blessings.

Congregation: *We have chosen to make this day a special day in our minds and in our hearts.*

Reader: We have chosen to come together as a community.

Congregation: *A community of hope, a community of compassion, a community of commitment.*

Reader: In order that we may renew our spirits, think about our lives and our world, and come to understand our sense of purpose, may our intention to reflect openly and honestly envelop us.

Congregation: *May we share with one another the best wishes of our hearts and minds.*

Reader: May we reflect upon where we have been.

May we reflect upon where we are going.

Of tasks completed.

Of tasks yet undone.

May our spiritual togetherness inspire us to find the meaning we need to sustain our innermost selves.

Congregation: *May our togetherness inspire us to work with each other to create a better tomorrow.*

2.

Reader: The old year has passed. Days of excitement and days of dread. Days of realized dreams and days of dashed hopes. Days where we treated others as we would have them treat us, and days of injustice toward ourselves and others. Days where we reveled in the glory of our lives, and days where we cursed our very existence. Days where we understood something of the continuum of life, and days where we were not able to see beyond our own self-preoccupations.

Congregation

Let me reflect on those days.

May I gain wisdom from those moments of my life.

May I learn from those events that shaped me and sculpted the lives of those around me.

May I acknowledge how I have affected the lives of others by my actions and my thoughts.

∞ VIDUI וְדוּי • PROFESSION OF ERRORS ∞

MUSIC

Reader: The Vidui is the traditional prayer of confession recited on Yom Kippur. Some medieval commentators note that there is a measure of solace in remembering that our ancestors were imperfect. Others objected to the mention that our ancestors sinned. The humanist Vidui recognizes that all human beings are subject to fallacy and are open to the possibility of forgiveness. Moses Ibn Ezra wrote: "No sin is so light that it may be overlooked; no sin is so heavy that one cannot repent of it."

∞ VIDUI READINGS ∞

1.

Reader and Congregation:

In order to change things in the world, we must understand the limits of the world; in order to change things in ourselves, we must know our own limits.

Which of my aspirations are unrealistic?

Which of my promises cannot be fulfilled?

Let me renounce my errors.

Let me remove my commitment from that which no longer nourishes my soul.

Let me give my energy and my will to those deeds that will help fulfill me,

And which will help the human race to survive.

2.

Reader: Who among us has never been in error? We recognize our limitations, and we feel compassion for each other in our weaknesses and in our strengths. Let us all say, following the ancient tradition:

Reader and Congregation:

I hereby forgive whoever has hurt me,

Whoever has done me any wrong,

Whether deliberately or by accident,

Whether by word or by deed.

May no one be punished on my account.

*As I forgive and pardon
Those who have wronged me,
I shall seek out those whom I have harmed
And ask them to forgive and pardon me
Whether I acted deliberately or inadvertently,
Whether by word or by deed.
May I not willfully repeat
The wrongs I have committed.*

*May justice rule the world,
Bringing joy to the land, happiness to the nation,
And renewed strength and light to our people.*

3.

Reader: In honor of the ancient tradition, we recite:

Reader and Congregation:

*All forms of vows, oaths and bonds
Which I have uttered, taken, or bound myself to
From the last Day of Atonement unto this present Day of Atonement,
Which is now come unto us for peace,
May those of my vows between my soul and myself
Be no longer deemed as vows,
My oaths as oaths, nor my bonds as binding.
Be they all null and void;
They shall not bind, nor shall they stand.*

*The vows I made after the last Atonement Day,
The oaths in my heart
I declared for my good:
Have I fulfilled them?
Have they changed my way of life?
Have they delivered me from error?*

4.

Reader:

Have we erred, willingly or unwillingly, knowingly or unknowingly?
Have we done nothing to stop the letting of blood and the destruction of the earth?

Congregation:

*Have we blocked our ears to the cries of children?
Have we denied our essential unity with nature and exploited the earth without thought for the future?*

Reader:

Have we erred against life by failing to work for change?
Have we refused to acknowledge our responsibility?
Have we said: I am only one person, what can I do, how can I matter?

Congregation:

*Who will hear my regret?
Who will open my prison and release me from habit?
To whom can I raise my voice?*

*I make the vows,
I am the listener;
My own voice is heard
By my own soul.*

5.

Reader: In the past year, there were times when we surrendered our own strength. We were too tired, too busy, and too afraid to remember that our fate is bound with the oppressed of the entire world.

Congregation: *I have seen violence scar the face of the planet; yet I did not speak.*

Reader: I have seen poverty and disease; yet I did not speak.

Congregation: *I have witnessed the pain and suffering of others; yet I did not speak.*

Reader: I have wanted to scream out in rage against injustice; yet I did not speak.

Congregation: *I have wanted to laugh with joy; yet I did not speak.*

Reader: I have wanted to share words of love; yet I did not speak.

Congregation: *Yet there were moments of outrage, pain and joy when I did speak. In the coming year, may I have the courage to speak what must be spoken.*

7.

Reader: This is what we ask of ourselves: to act justly and compassionately and to walk humbly with one another.

We shall not shrink from this task because it seems daunting. It is.

We shall not shrink from this task because we fear failure. We may fail.

We must begin, and if we fail, try again.

6.

Reader: Let us be silent for a few moments. Reflect upon your vows, your oaths, your bonds. Which shall you keep? Which shall you discard?

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Reader: We invite you to speak aloud your personal vidui, or to read aloud from the list below, so that our regrets, our hopes, and our fears for the upcoming year may mingle in this room as one congregation.

I avoid, I ignore, I am harsh.

I withdraw, I am callous, I withhold.

I gossip, I inflame, I am silent.

I mock, I neglect, I turn away.

I distort, I quarrel, I am unkind.

I obfuscate, I rationalize, I am unfair.

I yield to the comfortable, and I am zealous to a fault.

7.

Reader and Congregation:

All vows, promises and commitments we made since last Yom Kippur--and in the years before---may we be given the strength to keep them. But even as we vow 'next time,' we are conscious how last time we may have failed.

AL KHEYT על חטא

Reader: The Al Kheyт is not simply a formal list of faults. The misdeeds and selfish acts it enumerates are the stuff of daily life, and they point to our repeated moral misjudgments. It acknowledges a community of imperfect human beings and seeks communal forgiveness. We will sing the *Al Kheyт* responsively:

Solo

Have we erred willingly and unwillingly?

Choir

Have we erred through hardening our hearts?

Have we erred thoughtlessly?

Choir and Congregation

Have we erred in idle chatter?

Solo

Have we erred through immorality?

Choir and Congregation

Have we erred openly and in private?

Solo

Have we erred knowingly and deceitfully?

Choir and Congregation

Have we erred by the way we talk?

Solo

Have we erred by defrauding others?

Choir and Congregation

Have we erred in our innermost thoughts?

Solo

Have we erred through forbidden trysts?

Choir and Congregation

Have we erred through empty confession?

Solo

Have we erred by scorning parents and teachers?

Choir and Congregation

Have we erred purposely and by mistake?

Solo

Have we erred through foul speech?

Choir and Congregation

Have we erred though foolish talk?

MUSIC

Reader: For my silence,

Congregation:

S'lach lanu (סַלַּח לָנוּ) [forgive us].

May we pardon ourselves; may we forgive each other;

May we begin again.

Reader: For my indifference,

Congregation:

S'lach lanu. סַלַּח לָנוּ

May we pardon ourselves; may we forgive each other

May we begin again.

Reader: For the dulling of my senses and my outrage,

Congregation:

S'lach lanu. סַלַּח לָנוּ

May we pardon ourselves; may we forgive each other;

May we begin again.

Reader: For all that I did,

Congregation:

S'lach lanu. סַלַּח לָנוּ

May we pardon ourselves; may we forgive each other;

May we begin again.

Reader: For all that I failed to do,

Congregation:

S'lach lanu. סַלַּח לָנוּ

May we pardon ourselves; may we forgive each other;

May we begin again.

Reader: For not rising to fulfill the best in myself or aid others to strive for the best in themselves,

Congregation:

S'lach lanu. סַלַּח לָנוּ

May we pardon ourselves; may we forgive each other;

May we begin again.

Reader: For those and all other errors of my ways, forgive me, love me, bear with me as I will do my utmost to forgive you, love you, and bear with you.

Congregation:

S'lach lanu. סְלַח לָנוּ.

May we pardon ourselves; may we forgive each other;

May we begin again.

∞ TORAH READING AND DISCUSSION ∞



∞ NIZKOR -- נִזְכוֹר -- MEMORIAL SERVICE ∞

Reader: We invite all who wish to come to the front and light Yartzeit candles.

MUSIC

RECITATION OF THE HUMANISTIC KADDISH

All Rise

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁלֹמֹה בְּעֹלָמָא
נְבָרָא שְׁלֹמֹה כְּרַעוּתָנָא וְנִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּינוּ וְיִוְמָכֹון וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּעֵגְלָהּ וּבְזִמְנֵי קָרִיב וְאָמְרוּ שְׁלוֹם

יְהִי שְׁלֹמֹה רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמֵי וְלְעַלְמֵי עֲלַמְיָא
יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּךְ וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלַּל שְׁלֹמֹה
בְּעֹלָמָא בְּרַךְ הוּא

לְעֵלְיָהּ מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא תְּשַׁבְּחָתָהּ וְנִחַמְתָּא דְמִירָן בְּעֹלָמָא וְאָמְרוּ שְׁלוֹם
יְהִי שְׁלֹמֹה רַבָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ שְׁלוֹם
נַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּעוֹלָם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ שְׁלוֹם

YIT-GA-DAL V'-YIT-KA-DASH SH'LA-MA B'A-L'MA
NIV-RA SH'-LA-MA KHEER'-OO-TA-NA V'-NAM-LEEKH MAL-KHOO-TAY B'KHIE-YAY-KHON OO-
V'YO-MAY-KHON OO-V'KHIE-YAY D'-KHOL BAYT YIS-RA-EL, BA-AH-GA-LA OO-VEE-Z'MAN KA-
REEV, V'-EEM-ROO SHALOM.

Y'-HAY SH-LA-MA RAB-BA M'-VA-RAYKH L'A-LAM OO-L'-AL-MAY AL-MIE-YA.
YIT-BA-RAKH V'-YISH-TA-BAKH V'-YIT-PA-AR V'-YIT-RO-MAM V'YIT-NA-SAY V'YIT-HA-DAR V'-YIT-
AH-LE V'-YIT-HA-LAL SH'LA-MA B'-AL-MA B'-REEKH HOO.

L-AY-LA MIN KOL BIR-KHA-TA V'-SHEE-RA-TA TOOSH-B'-KHA-TA V'-NE-KHE-MA-TA DA-MEE-RAN
B'-AL-MA, V-EE-M'-ROO SHALOM.

Y'-HAY SH'-LA-MA RAB-BA V'-HIE-YEEM A-LAY-NOO V'-AL KOL YIS-RA-EL V'-EEM-ROO SHALOM.
NA-A-SE SHALOM BA-OLAM. A-LAY-NOO V'AL KOL YIS-RA-EL V'EEM-ROO SHALOM.

Wonderful is peace in the world.

Let us create a peaceful world and let us establish its kingdom now and in the future.

May peace come upon us to bless our lives.

*May we always continue to honor peace in the world, even though no praise can equal the
importance of its reality.*

May peace and life prevail for us and for all Israel.

Let us work to create peace here on earth for all people, and let us say Peace.

∞ NIZKOR READINGS ∞

1.

Reader: Humanity has the power to remember. As we stand in tribute to our loved ones, we celebrate the process of life and the power of memory. Those who loved us and those we loved:

Congregation

Nizkor—We Will Remember.

Reader: Those lost years ago, and those lost this past year:

Congregation

Nizkor—We Will Remember.

Reader: Those of our people lost to cruelty and hatred:

Congregation

Nizkor—We Will Remember.

Reader: Those of humanity lost to violence and destruction:

Congregation

Nizkor—We Will Remember.

Reader: Those who began our tradition; our ancestors of the distant past:

Congregation

Nizkor—We Will Remember.

Reader: Those who raised us; our fathers and mothers, grandparents, aunts, uncles:

Congregation

Nizkor—We Will Remember.

Reader: The most intimate losses; lovers, companions, friends:

Congregation

Nizkor—We Will Remember.

Please be Seated

MUSIC

2.

Reader and Congregation:

*Those I have loved, though now beyond my view,
Have given form and quality to my being.
And they live on, unfailingly feeding
My heart and mind and imagination.*

*They have led me into the wide universe
I continue to inhabit, and their presence
Is more vital to me than their absence.*

*Within me, their love and vision,
Now woven deep into my texture,
Live and will be mine till my days are done.
I will live only in the memory of those whom I have loved.*

3.

Reader:

In the rising of the sun and in its going down,

Congregation

We remember them.

Reader: In the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring,

Congregation

We remember them.

Reader: In the rustling of leaves and in the beauty of autumn

Congregation

We remember them.

Reader: In the beginning of the year and when it ends

Congregation

We will remember them.

Reader: When we are weary and in need of strength

Congregation

We remember them.

Reader: When we are lost and sick at heart

Congregation

We remember them.

Reader: When we have joys we yearn to share

Congregation

We remember them.

4.

Reader

We remember now,
Those with whom we shared
Those that gave us strength,
Those we cherished,
Those we loved.
We remember them at daybreak
As the sun peaks over the distant horizon.

Congregation

We remember them at dusk, when vision is difficult and shapes are poorly defined.

Reader: We remember them at the first signs of spring,
As the first blossoms bloom.

Congregation

We remember them in the stillness of winter, as the stark branches are set against a cold winter sky.

Reader: We remember them when we are alone,
And are afraid of tomorrow.

Congregation

We remember them at times of joy, wishing to share with them once more.

Reader: We remember them at times of difficulty,
Waiting for advice that does not come.

Congregation

We remember them always, for they are part of us now.



5.

Reader: Let us memorialize the peacemakers, those who taught, those who nurtured, those who loved, those who shared, those who identified with humankind, those who cared for humanity.

Congregation

*These people will live on in the land of the living
Even after they have left us.
So it has always been and so it will always be.*

Reader: May our bereavement for our loved ones who are no longer with us lead us to an expansion of our compassion for all of life and of our passion for wonder in our relationships. May we pursue peace among the living. May we find inner peace, shalom, in the acceptance of our loss, cherishing the memories of companionship which shall endure in us.

Congregation

May our community be a source of sustenance and support to all who mourn.

Reader: May all who mourn and all who remember find peace. May the memories of those we love and remember always be an inspiration and a blessing to us.



6.

Reader:

My father took part in their war for
Four years, and he didn't hate his
enemies or love them. But I know that
already there, day after day, he was
forming me out of his few—so very
few—

tranquilities, which he scraped up
between bombs and smoke, then put
them in his tattered pack, together with
the scraps of his mother's hardening
cake.

And in his eyes he gathered the name-
less dead, a great many dead he
gathered for my sake, that I might
recognize them in his look and love
them

and not die, as they did, in such horror
...He filled his eyes with them, and
he was mistaken: I must go out to all my wars.

7.

Reader

IN MEMORY OF THE SIX MILLION:

The Butterfly

The last, the very last,
So richly brightly dazzlingly
Yellow
Perhaps if the sun's tears would sing against a white
Stone

Such, such a yellow
Is carried way up high
It went away I'm sure because
It wished to kiss the world
Goodbye

For seven weeks I've lived
In here
Penned up inside this ghetto
But I have found my people here
The dandelions call to me
And the white chestnut candles
In the court

Only I never saw another butterfly
That butterfly was the last one
Butterflies don't live here
In the ghetto

❧ CLOSING MEDITATIONS ❧

1.

May this new year be a year of blessings:
Blessings of goodness, blessings of joy,
Peace and kindness, friendship and love,
Creativity, strength, and serenity,
Fulfilling work and dignity,
Satisfaction, success, and sustenance,
Physical health and radiance.

May truth and justice guide our acts
And compassion temper our lives
That we may blossom as we age
And become our sweetest selves.

2.

Reader: May the words and meditations of the *Days of Awe* find expression in our lives day by day, that we may bridge the gap between our conscience and our conduct, between what we believe and what we do.

Congregation

In this new season of the spirit, may our hearts be open with generosity and our hands ready with kindness.

Reader: May the day come soon when all humanity will recognize that we are one family.

3.

Reader: No outer force can shake off what binds us; neither prayers nor incense. Only when the people reached within themselves and took responsibility were they saved, only when they acted, and turned from their former ways.

Congregation

I must avoid empty vows, empty commitments, empty promises.

Reader: If we lack self-awareness, our vows will be empty.

Congregation

I must commit myself to deeds as well as to words.

Reader: We will be known by what we do as well as what we say.

Congregation

I must be open to experience and change, and not allow the shoring up¹⁹ of error. I must strip away prejudices.

Reader: Prejudice locks away some of our openness to life.

Congregation

I must sacrifice the comfort of that which is too familiar and blocks change.

I know what is right; let me act on that knowing.

The right action, or the way of error.

That is the question; that is the problem.

The decision is mine; the right action, or the way of error?

4.

תְּכִלֶּה שָׁנָה וְקִלְלוֹתֶיהָ

תַּחֵל שָׁנָה וּבִרְכוֹתֶיהָ

*Tikhleh shanah v'kil'loteha,
Tacheil shanah u-virkhoteha.*

May this year's troubles end, and a year of blessing begin.

MUSIC