



**5784 Readings Compiled
Rosh Hashanah Day 1**

**Reading Theme: Creation & Morning
"Radical Amazement" by Abraham Joshua Heschel
Read by Beth Lange**

Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement.
....get up in the morning and look at the world in a
way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is
phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat
life casually. To be spiritual is to be amazed.

**Reading Theme: Liberation, Freedom & Justice
"The Hill We Climb"**

**by US Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman
Read by Alexa Dolinko and Eddie Stone**

When day comes, we ask ourselves:
Where can we find light
In this never-ending shade?
The loss we carry, a sea we must wade.

We've braved the belly of the beast.
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace,
And the norms and notions of what "just is"
Isn't always justice.

And yet the dawn is ours before we knew it.
Somehow, we do it.
Somehow, we've weathered and witnessed
A nation that isn't broken, but simply
unfinished.

Scripture tells us to envision that:
"Everyone shall sit under their own vine
and fig tree,
And no one shall make them afraid."
If we're to live up to our own time, then
victory
Won't lie in the blade, but in all the bridges
we've made.
That is the promised glade,
The hill we climb, if only we dare it:
Because being American is more than a
pride we inherit -
It's the past we step into, and how we
repair it.

We will rebuild, reconcile, and recover,
In every known nook of our nation,
In every corner called our country,
Our people, diverse and dutiful.
We'll emerge, battered but beautiful.

When day comes, we step out of the
Shade, Aflame and unafraid.
The new dawn blooms as we free it,
For there is always light,
If only we're brave enough to see it,
If only we're brave enough to be it.

Reading Theme: Malchuyot/Majesty
"Theology" by Stuart Kestenbaum
Read by Phyllis Levun-Agostino

God isn't watching everything ...
 God is weaving and sewing,
 God is mending and repairing,, what with so much
 that is
 tattered and frayed. God is remembering the past
 by sewing it
 into the future. ...
 God knows all the songs
 and all the elements and at night she sings the
 world to bed.
 Sometimes she'll sing whole new worlds into being,
 just by naming the stuff of it.. Other times he'll
 get out the broom and sweep up
 the dust of the last universe, the grit and fluff,
 the shavings and the crumbs, the crumpled papers,
 and make a new world.. That's the one we're living
 in now
 and that's why it feels new and ancient at the same
 time.
 We begin our world where the last one ends.
 God has a barn raising and we're all working
 with the creator together, pushing up
 one wall at a time. People have begun to till the
 earth,
 reverently dropping the seeds in the furrows. God
 is becoming
 the seeds, remembering all the way back to the
 beginning of seed,
 which is a place where light could sleep,
 sleep and dream and then awaken, and become
 what it needs to be
 in this world, which is being created and re-created
 this minute.
 Let us all bless it..

Reading Theme: Zichronot/Remembrance
"The Story That Could Heal" by Janice Steinberg
Read by Chai and Mandi Wolfman

... My mother's mother, Dora, was born in transit,
 the family delayed months on their journey
 from Ukraine. ...

In a photograph of the clan, newly
 arrived in Milwaukee, she's a lap baby. ...

Dora died at 75 on Tisha B'Av
 a day of grief for the time millennia ago ...

This Tisha B'Av
 I light a *yahrzeit* candle for her ...

All that remains to me
 of my family's life in Ukraine,
 a life whose misery I know in my *kishkes*
 from history and Dora's harshness,
 are four silver *kiddush* cups.

Last week I made an imaginative journey
 toward my ancestors. I picked up a *kiddush*
 cup — a hand-sized goblet, the silver etched
 with blossoms. Closing my eyes
 I was astonished
 by joy.
 I pictured a room, simple but inviting,
 the good white cloth on the table
 freshly baked challah,
 soft light of Shabbos candles,
 the *kiddush* cup filled with wine,
 raised for blessing.

On Tisha B'Av, the only light
 Dora's *yahrzeit* candle, I wonder,
 is this the story that could heal
 if not the motherland then
 the mother-wound?
 A story of sweet wine in the *kiddush* cup
 of making *kedushah* —holiness
 making whole.

Reading Theme: Shofarot/Awakening
“How Would you Live Then?” by Mary Oliver
Read by Jon Rappoport

What if a hundred rose-breasted grosbeaks
 flew in circles around your head? What if
 the mockingbird came into the house with you and
 became your advisor? What if
 the bees filled your walls with honey and all
 you needed to do was ask them and they
 would fill
 the bowl? What if the brook slid downhill just
 past your bedroom window so you could
 listen
 to its slow prayers as you fell asleep? What if
 the stars began to shout their names, or to
 run
 this way and that way above the clouds? What if
 you painted a picture of a tree, and the
 leaves
 began to rustle, and a bird cheerfully sang
 from its painted branches? What if you
 suddenly saw
 that the silver of water was brighter than the silver
 of money? What if you finally saw
 that the sunflowers, turning toward the sun all day
 and every day – who knows how, but they
 do it – were
 more precious, more meaningful than gold?

Reading Theme: Rosh Hashanah and Going Forth
“Holding the Light” by Stuart Kestenbaum
Read by Diane Pezanoski

Gather up whatever is
 glittering in the gutter,
 whatever has tumbled
 in the waves or fallen
 in flames out of the sky,

for it's not only our
 hearts that are broken,
 but the heart
 of the world as well.
 Stitch it back together.

Make a place where
 the day speaks to the night
 and the earth speaks to the sky.
 Whether we created God
 or God created us

it all comes down to this:
 In our imperfect world
 we are meant to repair
 and stitch together
 what beauty there is, stitch it

with compassion and wire.
 See how everything
 we have made gathers
 the light inside itself
 and overflows? A blessing.

Rosh Hashanah Day 2

Reading Theme: Morning & Awakening
“Head of the Year” by Marge Piercy
Read by Linda Mathias Kaskel

The moon is dark tonight, a new
 moon for a new year. It is
 hollow and hungers to be full.
 It is the black zero of beginning.
 Now you must void yourself
 of injuries, insults, incursions.
 Go with empty hands to those
 you have hurt and make amends.

It is not too late. It is early
 and about to grow. Now
 is the time to do what you
 know you must and have feared
 to begin. Your face is dark
 too as you turn inward to face
 yourself, the hidden twin of
 all you must grow to be.

Forgive the dead year. Forgive
 yourself. What will be wants
 to push through your fingers.
 The light you seek hides
 in your belly. The light you
 crave longs to stream from
 your eyes. You are the moon
 that will wax in new goodness.

Reading Theme: God in the Life of Nature
Asher Bidvaro [Photo of text here](#)
commentary by Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan
Kol Haneshama: Machzor Leyamim Noraim
pp. 68-70
Read by Brad Moldofsky

Reading Theme: Peace
“The Late Year” by Marge Piercy
Read by Ina Winston

I like Rosh Hashanah late,
 when the leaves are half burnt
 umber and scarlet, when sunset
 marks the horizon with slow fire
 and the black silhouettes.
 of migrating birds perch
 on the wires davening.

I like Rosh Hashanah late
 when all living are counting
 their days toward death
 or sleep or the putting by
 of what will sustain them—
 when the cold whose tendrils
 translucent as a jellyfish

and with a hidden sting
 just brush our faces
 at twilight. The threat
 of frost, a premonition
 a warning, a whisper
 whose words we cannot yet decipher but will.

I repent better in the waning
 season when the blood
 runs swiftly and all creatures
 look keenly about them
 for quickening danger.
 Then I study the rock face
 of my life, its granite pitted
 and pocked and pickaxed
 eroded, discolored by sun
 and wind and rain-
 my rock emerging
 from the veil of greenery
 to be mapped, to be
 examined, to be judged.

Reading: Theme: Kaddish**“Remember to Remember” by Sabrina Sojourner****Read by Mollie Bass**

Remember to remember. Welcome with an open heart. Embrace being welcomed, regardless of the heart. Bring joy. Bring wonder. Forget what you think you know about The Story to discover what still needs discovering.

Remember to remember our story. Remember to tell the story as if you were there. Because you were there. We were there. Alongside each other. Waiting. Hoping. Giggling with anticipation. Prayerful. Awed. We were there. You were there. Remember to remember to tell your piece of Our Story.

Remember to remember joy. Cook with joy. Serve with joy. Read with joy. Sing with joy. Laugh with joy. Fill the space, whatever space you find yourself in, with so much joy that it must dance out doors and windows into our neighborhoods, communities, localities, the nation, around the globe and into the universe. Let it touch as many souls as possible along the way so that their joy also increases. Remember to remember to increase joy.

Remember to remember to welcome and to allow yourself to be welcomed.

Remember to remember to tell your piece of Our Story.

Remember to remember to embrace the fullness of your life.

Kol Nidre**Reading: Forgiveness****"How Divine is Forgiving?" by Marge Piercy****Read by Ann Dolinko & Tamar Frolichstein-Appel**

It's a nice concept
 but what's under the sculptured draperies?
 We forgive when we don't really care
 because what was done to us brought unexpected
 harvest, as I always try to explain
 to the peach trees as I prune them hard,
 to the cats when I shove pills against
 the Gothic vaults of their mouths

We forgive those who betrayed us
 years later because memory has rotted
 through like something left out in the weather
 battered clean then littered dirty
 in the rain, chewed by mice and beetles,
 frozen and baked and stripped by the wind
 til it is unrecognizable, corpse
 or broken machine, something long useless.

We forgive those whom their own machinations
 have sufficiently tangled, enshrouded,
 the fly who bit us to draw blood and who
 hangs now a gutted trophy in a spider's
 airy larder; more exactly, the friend
 whose habit of lying has immobilized him
 at last like a dog trapped in a cocoon
 of fishing line and barbed hooks.

We forgive those we firmly love
 because anger hurts, a coal that burns
 and smolders still scorching the tissues
 inside, blistering wherever it touches
 so that we bury the hot clinkers in a mound
 of caring, suffocate the sparks with promises,
 drown them in tears, reconciling.

We forgive mostly not from strength
 but through imperfections, for memory
 wears transparent as a glass with the pattern
 washed off, till we stare past what injured us,
 We forgive because we too have done
 the same to others easy as a mudslide;
 or because anger is a fire that must be fed
 and we are too tired to rise and haul a log.

Reading: Theme of Forgiveness/Atonement
“Personal Kol Nidrei” by Kohenet Judith Hollander
Read by Marty Rosenheck

Again, still, I stand before you
 Again, still, I expect no response
 Yet, as day ends
 Rays of the light of forgiveness created before I was
 Surround me.

I cannot hide

I lift up my face toward the light with expectation
 Knowing that nothing that was done can be undone
 Yet also knowing that the miracle of atonement
 exists even for me, a poor sinner

And for you

I tilt my face toward the sound of music
 And the sound of mumbling.
 We are all sinners, asking for the miracle of
 atonement

Year after year we make vows
 Year after year we fall short

Year after year the music infuses us with hope
 Knowing that sins from the previous day of
 atonement cannot be erased
 Yet hoping

Standing before you and the whole congregation
 I vow that from this day of atonement to the next I
 will not repeat the same mistakes.
 That these past mistakes, not repeated, shall be as
 stepping stones to You.

I lift up my face toward the light with expectation
 I am bathed in the light of repentance
 Like from a [mikveh](#) I emerge,

Not new born
 But clean

Ready

Shehekheyatnu
 Ve'kiyamatnu
 Ve'higiatnu
 La'zeman Hazeh

Reading: Yom Kippur and Going Forth
“Kol Nidrey: All Vows” Marcia Falk
Read by Sandy Spatz

All vows –
 all promises and pledges –

that we have made to ourselves
 and that no longer serve
 for the good–

may their grip be loosened

that we be present of mind and heart
 to the urgency of the hour.

Yom Kippur Morning

Reading theme: Awakening & Praise of Nature
“Wildly Unimaginable Blessings” by Alden Solovy
Read by Deena and Jordan Fischer

Let us dream
 Wildly unimaginable blessings...
 Blessings so unexpected,
 Blessings so unbelievable in this era,
 That their very existence
 Uplifts our vision of creation,
 Our relationships to each other,
 And our yearnings for life itself.

Let us dream
 Wildly unimaginable blessings...
 A complete healing of mind, body, and spirit,
 A complete healing for all,
 The end of suffering and strife,
 The end of plague and disease,
 When kindness flows from the river of love,
 When goodness flows from the river of grace,
 Awakened in the spirit of all beings,
 When G-d's light,
 Radiating holiness
 Is seen by everyone.

Let us pray-
 With all our hearts-
 For wildly unimaginable blessings,
 So that G-d will hear the call
 To open the gates of the Garden,
 Seeing that we haven't waited
 That we've already begun to repair the world,
 In testimony to our faith in life
 Our faith in each other
 And our faith in the Holy One.
 Blessed be G-d's Name.

Reading theme: Creation, Nature, and Love
“Keep Moving” by poet Maggie Smith
Read by Nancy Katz

Write breathe on your to-do list.
 Write blink. Write, sit and eat. Then cross
 everything off.
 How satisfying! Give yourself credit for living.
 Keep Moving

Remember putting on glasses for the first time:
 Suddenly, the trees had individual leaves; the moon
 had defined edges.
 Try to see through that clear lens-everything as it is,
 not blurred or
 Diffused by grief or anger. Look around you and
 marvel.
 Keep Moving

Focus on who you are and what you've built,
 Not who you'd planned on being and what you'd
 expected to have.
 Trust that the present moment – however difficult,
 however
 Different from what you'd imagined – has
 something to teach you.
 Keep Moving

Accept that you are a work in progress, both a
 revision
 and a draft; You are better and more complete than
 earlier
 versions of yourself, but you also have work to do.
 Be open to change.
 Allow yourself to be revised.
 Keep Moving.

Reading Theme: Prayer for our Country
“Prayer for Our Country” by Rabbi Ayelet Cohen
Read by Karen Englehardt

Our God and God of our ancestors,
 Bless this country and all who dwell within it.
 Help us to experience the blessings of our lives
 And circumstances
 To be vigilant, compassionate, and brave.
 Strengthen us when we are afraid.
 Help us to channel our anger
 So that it motivates us to action.
 Help us feel our fear
 So that we do not become numb.
 Help us to be generous with others.
 So that we raise each other up
 Help us to be humble in our fear, knowing that as
 vulnerable as we feel there are those at greater risk.
 And that it is our holy work to stand with them
 Help us to taste the sweetness of liberty
 To not take for granted the freedoms won in
 generations past or in recent days
 To heal and nourish our democracy,
 That i may be like a tree planted by the water
 Whose roots reach down to the stream
 It need not fear drought when it comes, its leaves
 are always green
 Source of all Life,
 Guide our leaders with righteousness
 Strengthen their hearts but keep them from
 hardening
 That they may use their influence and authority to
 speak truth and act for justice
 May all who dwell in this country share in its bounty,
 enjoy its freedoms and be protected by its laws
 May this nation use its power and wealth to be a
 voice for justice, peace and equality for all
 Who dwell on earth
 May we be strong and have courage to be bold in our
 action and deep in our compassion
 To discern when we must listen and when we must
 act

To uproot bigotry, intolerance, misogyny, racism,
 discrimination and violence in all its forms
 To celebrate the many faces of God reflected in the
 wondrous diversity of humanity
 To welcome the stranger and the immigrant and to
 honor the gifts of those who seek refuge and
 possibility here,
 As they have since before this nation was born
 Let justice well up like waters, and righteousness
 like a mighty stream

Reading theme: Yizkor and Grief
“This Year Was the First Year I Could Not
Remember Your Voice” by Clint Smith
Read by Fran Rosenstein

I tried to imagine the phrases only you would say,
 but could only hear them falling
 from someone else’s lips.

I tried to imagine the stories you would tell me,
 but your laugh collapsed
 under the weight of this grief.

I remember the words you uttered,
 but I don’t remember the voice
 that said them.

I remember you would call me sugar,
 but I can’t remember exactly how
 the r melted when it met the air.

I remember how you’d tell me be careful,
 but I am forgetting how your accent cocooned
 the warning around my ears.

It’s strange how I cannot remember your voice,
 but if I heard it, I would immediately know
 it was you.