



**5785 Readings
Compiled
Rosh Hashanah Day 1**

**Reading Theme: Creation & Morning
Read by Miles Robin
The Summer Day
By Mary Oliver**

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean—
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead
of up and down—
who is gazing around with her enormous and
complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly
washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats
away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall
down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll
through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

**Reading Theme: Liberation & Justice
Read by Melanie & Meredith Fitzgibbons
Kindness
By Naomi Shihab Nye**

Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.
What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness.

Before you know kindness as the deepest thing
inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest
thing.
You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.

Then it is only kindness that makes sense
anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day to mail letters
and
purchase bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
it is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.

Reading Theme: Malchuyot/Majesty**Read by Jordan & CJ Parnell****Prayer by Maya Angelou**

Father, Mother, God,
 Thank You for Your presence
 during the hard and mean days.
 For then we have You to lean upon.

Thank You for Your presence
 during the bright and sunny days,
 for then we can share that which we have
 with those who have less.

And thank You for Your presence
 during the Holy Days, for then we are able
 to celebrate You and our families
 and our friends.

For those who have no voice,
 we ask You to speak.
 For those who feel unworthy,
 we ask You to pour Your love out
 in waterfalls of tenderness.

For those who live in pain,
 we ask You to bathe them
 in the river of Your healing.

For those who are lonely, we ask
 You to keep them company.
 For those who are depressed,
 we ask You to shower upon them
 the light of hope.

Dear Creator, You, the borderless
 sea of substance, we ask You to give to all the
 world that which we need most—Peace.
 Amen.

Reading Theme: Zichronot/Remembrance**Read by Gwenan Wilbur & Larry Wood****Our Angels: For Yehuda Amichai****By Howard Schwartz**

Our angels
 Spend much of their time sleeping
 In their dreams
 They tear down the new houses by the sea
 And build old ones
 In their place.

No matter how long they may sleep
 One hundred two hundred years
 Ten centuries is not too much
 The first to wake up
 Takes the torch that has been handed down
 Adds a drop of oil to the lamp
 Blesses the eternal light
 And then recalls the name
 Of every other angel
 And one by one as they are remembered
 They wake up.

For them as for us
 There is nothing more beautiful
 Than memory.

Reading Theme: Shofarot/Awakening
Read by Debi and David Lewis
From Blossoms by Li-Young Lee

From blossoms comes
 this brown paper bag of peaches
 we bought from the boy
 at the bend in the road where we turned
 toward
 signs painted *Peaches*.

From laden boughs, from hands,
 from sweet fellowship in the bins,
 comes nectar at the roadside, succulent
 peaches we devour, dusty skin and all,
 comes the familiar dust of summer, dust we
 eat.

O, to take what we love inside,
 to carry within us an orchard, to eat
 not only the skin, but the shade,
 not only the sugar, but the days, to hold
 the fruit in our hands, adore it, then bite into
 the round jubilation of peach.

There are days we live
 as if death were nowhere
 in the background; from joy
 to joy to joy, from wing to wing,
 from blossom to blossom to
 impossible blossom, to sweet impossible
 blossom.

Reading Theme: New Growth
Read by Diane Pezanoski & Phyllis
Levun-Agostino
Planting Seeds of the New Year
By Rabbi David G. Winship

Preparing myself for the new year
 Is such a slog
 Through so much pain,
 So much grief,
 So much bad news,
 The question: where do we go from here?

Like an apple,
 The year was filled
 With bites of sweetness.
 Yet its core was indigestible
 The stem, too tough to swallow.

Yet the core of my apple,
 Of this past year,
 Contains seeds
 Which when not consumed
 But rather freed and planted
 Give rise to apple trees,
 Give rise to the possibility
 Of generations more of blessing.

May the seeds of this year
 Be planted
 And blossom
 Into Justice.
 Into Love
 Into Joy
 Into Peace.

Rosh Hashanah Day 2

Reading Theme: Morning & Awakening

Read by Ilene Lebowitz

By Chaim Stern, page 24 Kol Haneshamah

This Rosh Hashanah, each of us enters this sanctuary with a different need.

Some hearts are full of gratitude and joy:

They are overflowing with the happiness of love and the joy of life;

they are eager to confront the day, to make the world more fair;

they are recovering from illness or have escaped misfortune.

And we rejoice with them.

Some hearts ache with sorrow:

Disappointments weigh heavily upon them, and they have tasted despair; families have been broken; loved ones lie on a bed of pain;

death has taken those whom they cherished.

May our presence and sympathy bring them comfort.

Some hearts are embittered:

They have sought answers in vain; have had their ideals mocked and betrayed; life has lost its meaning and value.

May the knowledge that we too are searching restore their hope that there is something to find.

Some spirits hunger:

They long for friendship; they crave understanding; they yearn for warmth.

May we in our common need gain strength from one another; sharing our joys, lightening each other's burdens, and praying for the welfare of our community.

Reading Theme: Connection and Covenant

Read by Phyllis Kravitz

By Marge Piercy, page 291 Kol Haneshamah

White butterflies, with single

black fingerpaint eyes on their wings

dart and settle, eddy and mate

over the green tangle of vines

in Labor Day morning steam.

The year grinds into ripeness

and rot, grapes darkening,

pears yellowing, the first

Virginia creeper twining crimson,

the grasses, dry straw to burn.

The New Year rises, beckoning

across the umbrellas on the sand.

I begin to reconsider my life.

What is the yield of my impatience?

What is the fruit of my resolve?

I turn from my frantic white dance

over the jungle of productivity

and slowly a niggun slides,

cold water down my throat.

I rest on a leaf spotted red.

Now is the time to let the mind

search backwards like the raven loosed

to see what can feed us. Now,

the time to cast the mind forward

to chart an aerial map of the months.

The New Year is a great door

that stands across the evening and Yom

Kippur is the second door. Between them

are song and silence, stone and clay pot

to be filled from within myself.

I will find there both ripeness and rot,

what I have done and undone,

what I must let go with the waning days

and what I must take in. With the last

tomatoes, we harvest the fruit of our lives.

Reading Theme: Peace and Justice**Read by Betsy Fuchs****By Rabbi Leila Gal Berner****Page 379 in Kol Haneshamah**

Try to imagine a time of true peace and tranquility, and think about your part in helping this time to come about. What can you do? What can you commit to? How will you be a peacemaker?

Reading Theme: Kaddish**Read by Robin Trilling****In Praise of the Living by Harvey J. Fields****Page 1214 in Kol Haneshamah***Yitgadal veyitkadash shemey raba*

This profound praise of the living
Praise for the generous gift of life.

Praise for the presence of loved ones,
the bonds of friendship, the link of memory.

Praise for the toil and searching,
the dedication and visions, the ennobling
aspirations.

Praise for the precious moorings of faith, for
courageous souls, for prophets, psalmists, and
sages.

Praise for those who walked before us, the
sufferers in the valley of shadows, the steadfast
in the furnace of hate.

Praise for the God of our fathers,
the Source of all growth and goodness,
the Promise of which we build tomorrow.

Yitgadal veyitkadash shemey raba

This, the profound praise we offer.
Praise for the generous gift of life.

Kol Nidre**Reading: Forgiveness****Read by Ida Salusky****Held in the Brokenness: by Heather Paul**

God, I know that life is not linear
 that time is a spiral,
 that every change
 is a chance to try again.

Each time I reach a new year,
 a new month, a new week, a new day
 I tell myself, "This time will be different."

And yet, each year, I find I'm still here,
 facing a transition with hope and *kavanot*
 the same fears, the same beliefs,
 stories that have served me,
 that continue to hurt me,
 no matter how many times
 I've tried to let them go.

God, I yearn to unlearn, to release this longing
 and loathing
 to believe the soul You've placed within me is
 pure, to know, without a doubt, that I am good.

But when I forget, when I repeat my mistakes,
 when I fail and fall, when I find myself here,
 tomorrow or next year,
 God, teach me to see myself with compassion.
 Help me forgive myself, as I have forgiven
 others, and as You have always forgiven me.

Hold me in my brokenness
 because I am whole in my holiness
 a human who is praisable, who is worthy,
 who is loved.

Blessed are You, God, who accepts and forgives
 me
 even when I can't accept or forgive myself.

Reading: Atonement**Read by Miriam Whiteley & Evan Canter****A Prayer of Forgiveness by Suzanne Sabransky**

We forgive,
 Not because another requires it,
 But because our souls demand it.

Forgiveness is like a tonic,
 Soothing away the pain of a wrong done.

We forgive to heal,
 We forgive to repair,
 We forgive to live again.

Where once we were trapped,
 We become freed.
 Where once we were held back,
 We move forward even stronger.

We forgive to heal ourselves,
 We forgive to let go,
 We forgive,
 Because forgiveness given
 Is forgiveness received,
 And we deserve forgiveness.

We forgive them,
 We pardon them,
 We let go of the pain.

Reading Theme: Honest Honest Reflection**Read by Jonathan Markowitz****Kol Nidre by *Merle Feld***

I am grateful for this,
a moment of truth,
grateful to stand before
You
in judgment.

You know me as a liar
and I am flooded with relief
to have my darkest self
expressed at last.

Every day I break my
vows –
to be the dutiful child,
selfless parent, caring
friend, responsible citizen
of the world.

No one sees, no one
knows,
how often I take the easy
way
how often I let myself off
the hook,
how often I give myself
the benefit of the doubt –
every day, every day.

On this day, this one day,
I stand before You naked,
without disguise, without
embellishment, naked,
shivering, ridiculous.

I implore you –
Let me try again.

Yom Kippur Morning

Reading theme: Awakening & Praise of Nature

Keep Moving by Maggie Smith

Read by Fran Rosenstein

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.

Revise the story

You tell yourself

About starting over. Consider

Not only how terrifying change

Can be but also how exhilarating.

Consider this time

An opportunity to make a new

And improved life.

Keep Moving.

Consider all you've outlived – including the life
you

Thought you would have. You are durable,
adaptable,

Resilient, just being here is a triumph.

Hour by hour, prove the voice inside wrong, the
one that says you can't do it.

Do it.

Keep Moving.

Reading theme: Creation, Nature, and Love

Get Up by Rabbi Allan Maller

Read by Rebecca and Jason Osborn

Get Up.

O Lord, sometimes I feel sad, useless. So aware
of the times I have failed. Last Rosh Hashanah's
resolutions soon faded away. My bad habits
remain unbroken. My good intentions remain
unrealized. I can make no new vows, I can make
no new efforts, so I give up.

And then, during the Kol Nidre, I heard your
plea, "Get up! I only commanded one day for
afflicting your soul. I gave you ten days for
repentance, for turning over a new leaf in the
Book of Life. Now you will have 50 weeks... to
be renewed. Even if you don't have faith in
yourself, I have faith in you. Get up off the floor
and get up quickly. Falling isn't the worst sin.
Staying on the floor is."

Reading Theme: Prayer for our Country
Read by Jackie Kaplan-Perkins, Jon Marshall
and Carolyn Shapiro
by Rabbi Ayelet Cohen

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 to 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 it 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

(Jeremiah 17:8; Isaiah 16:3–5; Amos 5:24)

Reading theme: Yizkor and Grief**Forgive Yourself by Emily Maroutian****Read by Joanne Jacobson & Ellen Wertheim**

Forgive yourself for how you chose to survive.

Forgive yourself for the desires you judged harshly.

Forgive yourself for indulging in things that took up your time but didn't fulfill you.

Forgive yourself for declaring yourself as someone you're not.

Forgive yourself for your chosen avenues of negative expression.

Forgive yourself for all the times you didn't add value to others.

Forgive yourself for what you discovered about yourself that you didn't like.

Forgive yourself for whatever ugliness you saw in yourself. Forgive yourself for not correcting what you think you should have.

Forgive yourself for the parts you couldn't respect.

Forgive yourself for all these judgments.

Forgive yourself for not being able to forgive yourself before.