

Shofar: Tradition says that a ram's horn was sounded at Mount Sinai when the Jewish people promised to accept and honor *Torah*. The *shofar's* distinct sounds are announced by name: *Tekiah* calls the congregation to attention; *Teruah* calls people together; *Shevarim* represents hopes for a good year; and *Tekiah Gedolah* welcomes the New Year.

S'lichot: "Forgiveness." The prayer service held on the Saturday evening preceding *Rosh Hashanah*. At EET, an opportunity for song and prayer, dressing our *Torah* scrolls in their High Holy Day covers, and hearing the *shofar*.

Tashlich: "To throw." Derived from words of the prophet Micah, "God shall throw their sins into the depths of the sea." On *Rosh Hashanah* afternoon, Jews gather at a body of flowing water and throw in bits of bread which represent our errors of the past year.

Teshuvah: "Return." Returning to doing what is right is the subject of many High Holy Day prayers. According to our traditions, in order to repent, a person must recognize the sin, feel remorse, undo any damage done, apologize, and vow not to do it again.

Yizkor: "May God Remember." Memorial prayers recited for a deceased loved one, *Yizkor* is said on the three traditional pilgrimage festivals (*Succot*, *Pesach*, and *Shavuot*) and on *Yom Kippur*. Some Jews light a 24-hour memorial (*yahrtzeit*) candle on the evenings preceding *Yizkor* observances.

Yom Kippur: "Day of Atonement." *Yom Kippur* is a purely religious holiday, a time of fasting, charitable giving, and repentance, as we take stock of our lives. The holiday begins on *Yom Kippur* Eve with the solemn melody of the *Kol Nidre* prayer.



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ק"ק אל אמת

Guide to Prayers and Rituals



Aleinu: "It is upon us." A prayer in praise of God, *Aleinu* affirms the relationship between God and the Jewish people. Originally from the High Holy Day liturgy, *Aleinu* is now part of *Shabbat* and festival services.

Aliyah: "To go up." The honor of being called to the *bimah* to recite the blessings before and after the *Torah* reading.

Avinu Malkeinu: "Our Parent, Our Sovereign." A High Holy Day prayer asking God to show us grace, acknowledging that we do not receive blessings as a reward for our deeds.

G'lilah is preparing the *Torah* scroll to be read, and, after the reading, tying the scroll and replacing its cover and ornaments.

Haftarah: From the Hebrew for "conclude" or "complete." *Haftarah* is a selection from one of the books of the Prophets or Writings that has a theme in common with the week's *Torah* portion.

Hagbah: *Hagbah* is lifting the open *Torah* scroll aloft and displaying the text to the congregation, recalling the experience at Sinai when *Torah* was first displayed.

Hakafah: From the Hebrew word for "circle," the procession carrying a *Torah* scroll around the sanctuary as congregants stand and gather in the aisles to see the scroll. This encircling of the congregation is symbolic of *Torah's* belonging to the entire community.

Havdalah: "Separation." *Havdalah* ends *Yom Kippur* and *Shabbat* by engaging our five senses: seeing the braided candle, feeling its warmth, smelling sweet spices, tasting wine, and hearing blessings, as we bid bid farewell to the sacred time.

Kaddish: an ancient prayer in Aramaic, recited by mourners but also recited during daily and *Shabbat* prayer services. *Kaddish*, only said in the presence of a *minyan* (at least 10 individuals), enables the mourner to seek the comfort offered by praying with others. *Kaddish* is not about death, but about praising God, as we look beyond ourselves for peace and wholeness.

Kiddush: "Sanctification." The blessing recited over wine, a symbol of joy, thanks God for creating the fruit of the vine and the blessings of the day.

Kol Nidre: "All vows." This sung prayer, written in Aramaic, ushers in *Yom Kippur*. One asks to be excused and released from vows made to God but not fulfilled.

L'Shanah Tovah Tikatevu: "May you be inscribed [in the Book of Life] for a good year." This is the customary greeting among Jews on *Rosh Hashanah*.

N'ilah: "Shutting or Locking." The final *Yom Kippur* prayer service gives us one more opportunity for atonement and renewal at the end of the Ten Days of Awe, and ends with *Tekiah Gedolah*, the longest blast of the *Shofar*.

Rosh Hashanah: "Head of the year." *Rosh Hashanah* begins a 10-day period of self-examination, charity, and prayer--a time to resolve to do better in the coming year. One beloved tradition is eating apples or bread dipped in honey, to signify our wishes for a sweet new year.



For more information on the High Holy Days, see <http://urj.org/holidays/highholidays>