

## **Glossary for the High Holidays**

Akeidah - "the binding of Isaac" is the Torah reading from Genesis 22 for the second day of Rosh Hashanah and is an important motif in the High Holy Day prayers.

Aleynu - a prayer expressing God's sovereignty and a hope for the future recognition of the unity of humanity with God. There is a special recitation of Aleynu on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Al Chet - "for the sin" is a long communal confession of sins (written as a double acrostic) recited at Yom Kippur services.

Amidah - "the standing prayer" is the central prayer of each service, consisting of three parts: praise of God, petition or discussion of the specific day, and thanksgiving.

Aseret yemei teshuvah - "the ten days of repentance," the sacred ten-day period from Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur.

Ashamnu - "we have sinned" is an alphabetical listing of sins recited collectively on Yom Kippur.

Avodah - a special service within the Yom Kippur Musaf describing the service of Yom Kippur which was conducted by the High Priest in the days of the Temple.

Elul - the Hebrew month preceding Rosh Hashanah and a time of preparation for the Days of Awe. Midrash ascribes the name to a Hebrew acronym for the phrase, ani le-dodi ve-dodi li - "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine" (Song of Songs 6:3)

G'mar Chatimah Tovah - "May you be sealed for goodness (in the Book of Life)" is the greeting we say to one another on Yom Kippur.

Kavanah - A "spiritual intention" brought to a prayer experience.

Kiddush - the blessing inaugurating a festival or the Sabbath recited over a cup of wine.

Kol Nidre - "all vows" is the declaration with which Yom Kippur begins and is recited three times. A formula releasing us from unfilled vows, Kol Nidre's melody is one of the most beloved and well known of all liturgical compositions.

L'shanah tovah tikateivu - "May you be inscribed for a good year," the traditional greeting for Rosh Hashanah.

Machzor - the High Holy Day prayer book.

Malchuyot - "kingship," one of the three special sections recited in the Musaf service of Rosh Hashanah.

Minchah - the afternoon service.

Musaf - "additional service" which contains the special liturgical themes on the holidays.

Neilah - "the closing" is the fifth and last service of Yom Kippur, referring to the closing of the heavenly gates.

Rosh Hashanah - "the head of the year" marks the beginning of the Hebrew month of month of Tishrei, is the New Year. On this holy day, God is acknowledged as sovereign of the universe and humanity is judged.

Selichot - penitential prayers for forgiveness in the Yom Kippur liturgy. Selichot is also the name of special services held on the Saturday night before Rosh Hashanah.

Shabbat Shuvah - "the Sabbath of returning" between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, named for the special prophetic reading (haftarah) that begins with the call, "Return, O Israel."

Shacharit - the morning service. It consists of the Shema, the Amidah, and a Torah service. On Rosh Hashanah there is also a shofar service (except on Shabbat.)

Shehecheyanu - "who has kept us in life" is a blessing recited when reaching a new season or an important event in life. It expresses thanksgiving for having lived to participate in that event.

Shevarim - one of the sounds of the shofar, consisting of three short blasts.

Shofar - ram's horn, blown on Rosh Hashanah (except on Shabbat) and at the end of Yom Kippur.

Shofarot - One of 3 special sections in the Musaf service of Rosh Hashanah.

Tashlich - "casting" is the ceremony conducted on the afternoon of Rosh Hashanah at a body of water, symbolically casting our sins into the water to be carried away.

Teki'ah - one of the sounds of the shofar, consisting on one long blast.

Teru'ah - one of the sounds of the shofar, consisting of nine short, staccato blasts.

Teshuvah - repentance (from the Hebrew word meaning "to return"). The act of teshuvah includes acknowledgement of wrongdoing, regret, and change of conduct.

Unetanah tokef - one of the most important of the holy day piyyutim (liturgical poems.) It is recited during Musaf on Rosh Hashanah and on Yom Kippur and vividly depicts the Day of Judgment.

Vidui - "confession." A central part of the prayers of Yom Kippur in which we confess our sins. There are two such prayers, the short Ashamnu and the long Al Chet.

Yamim Nora'im - the "Days of Awe" refers to Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and the entire period surrounding them.

Yizkor - the service of remembering our departed loved ones, recited on Yom Kippur. Yizkor is also said on the last day of each of the holy days: Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot.

Yom Ha'din - "the Day of Judgment," another name for Rosh Hashanah.

Yom Ha'zikaron - "the Day of Remembrance," another name for Rosh Hashanah, based on the concept that on that day God remembers us.

Yom Kippur - the "Day of Atonement," which falls on the tenth day of Tishrei. It is observed through day-long prayer, fasting, study, and refraining from pleasures.

Zichronot - "remembrances" is one of the three special sections recited during the Musaf service of Rosh Hashanah.