

Preview Version

TO INSPIRE YOU THROUGH THE HIGH HOLIDAY SERVICES

REFLECTIONS



Preview Version

Chabad.ORG

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Shul in Cape Town, South Africa, for initiating this project.

We invite you to visit Chabad.org for further inspiration and
information about every aspect of Jewish life and observance
(but not on the Shabbat or Jewish holidays, of course).

Please send your comments and feedback to feedback@chabad.org.

WELCOME!

We are so glad you are here to celebrate the High Holidays with us.

We know. The services are long, and some of the prayers are obscure, even for a seasoned Hebrew speaker. The good news is that prayer is a journey. We'll be saying some of the most familiar sections together, and you can feel perfectly comfortable going at your own pace, taking your time to read, meditate and let the ancient words of the prayers wash over you.

On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we add lots of liturgical poems into the cantor's repetition of the Amidah. Many of them have taken on a life of their own, with their unique tunes, tempos and deep-rooted meaning. Others may be [illegible] foreign to you. Sometimes, you may feel your mind wandering.

That's OK. Even on Yom Kippur—when we dress in white and eschew food—we are still humans, not angels. For when your mind needs a break, we've prepared a special booklet that contains 26 meditations, each one linked to a specific highlight in the prayer services.

For your convenience, we've noted the page numbers in the Chabad Annotated Machzor **(Key: = RH, = YK)** where you can find the liturgy connected to each meditation. Yet there is no right or wrong way to read this book. You may want to gobble it up in one sitting or you may prefer to nibble, opening it occasionally, or even saving it all for after services.

The main thing is that it should help draw you deeper into the prayer service, the sanctity of these days and (with G-d's help) affect you for the rest of the year.

Please take your seat, settle in and get ready to experience the High Holidays like never before!

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Shema שמע

The oldest and most central of our prayers, declaring G-d's unity

Shema Yisrael—Hear O Israel—is not a prayer. It is a meditation. And it is a journey.

It is a journey that begins with the mind. Visualize the heavens above in all their majesty, the earth below and all its creatures and beauty. Travel through your own life and the many stories it contains, those who have touched your heart, and your love towards them—and find within all these the oneness of a single Being, found within all things, and yet beyond all time and space.

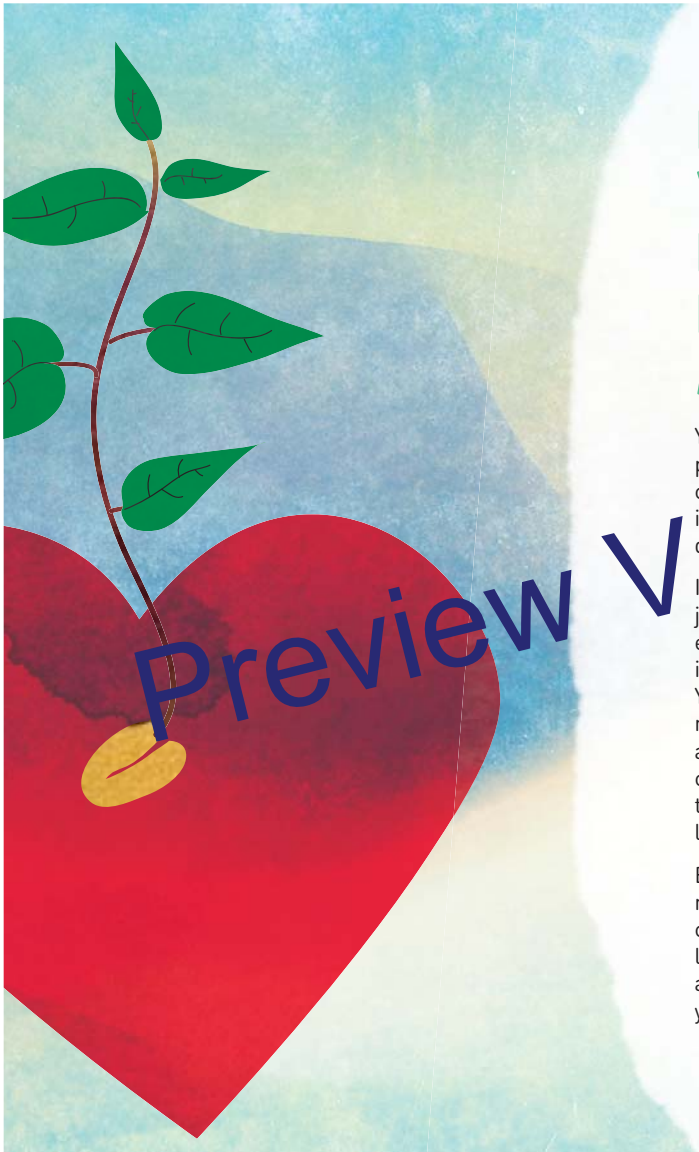
From there, it leads to your heart. "You shall love." Because once you awaken to this oneness, you cannot help but arrive at love, an unquenchable yearning to bond with this eternal Being, with all your heart, with every ounce of life within you, escaping every bound and limit.

And ultimately, this realization and this love will lead to action. To learning and to teaching. To the mitzvahs that we do as we sit in our homes and as we go out into the world. To draw that oneness into our own lives, and into the lives of all around us.

30, 105 | 44, 141



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PEACE IS WHEN YOUR MIND, YOUR HEART AND YOUR HANDS ALL WORK AS ONE.

You may consider yourself a single person, but there are many characters playing their own script inside you, each capable of detaching itself from the others.

Intellect will fire off on its own journey happily detached from emotion. Emotion will burn itself up in a fire that never comes to action. Your arms and legs can go through mindless, heartless, meaningless actions day in and out. And the soul can fly high, oblivious to anything that concerns your down-to-earth life.

But when you eat your meal with mindfulness, do business with a conscience, treat a cranky child with loving patience—in all these things, a harmony of parts is achieved. All of you becomes one.

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Amidah עמידה

A formulation of blessings in which we acknowledge G-d, pray to Him and thank Him.

The Amidah is a standing prayer.
It is also called the silent prayer.
Our lips move.
We speak words.
But we are silent.
Because we stand in awe.
We stand ready to receive wonder.

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33, 109 | 47, 14



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STOP SUGGESTING TO YOUR MAKER HOW TO RESCUE YOU. PREPARE FOR WONDER.

Trust transcends hope, as the sky above transcends the earth below.

A thread of hope is an anchor to the ground, a narrow path you've set for destiny to lead you.

The thread snaps, and your eyes look up to see nothing more than the open sky. Hope is gone. All you can do now is trust the One who has no bounds.

That is Trust: When you stop suggesting to your Maker how He could rescue you. When you are prepared to be surprised by wonders and open to miracles.

Aleinu עלינו

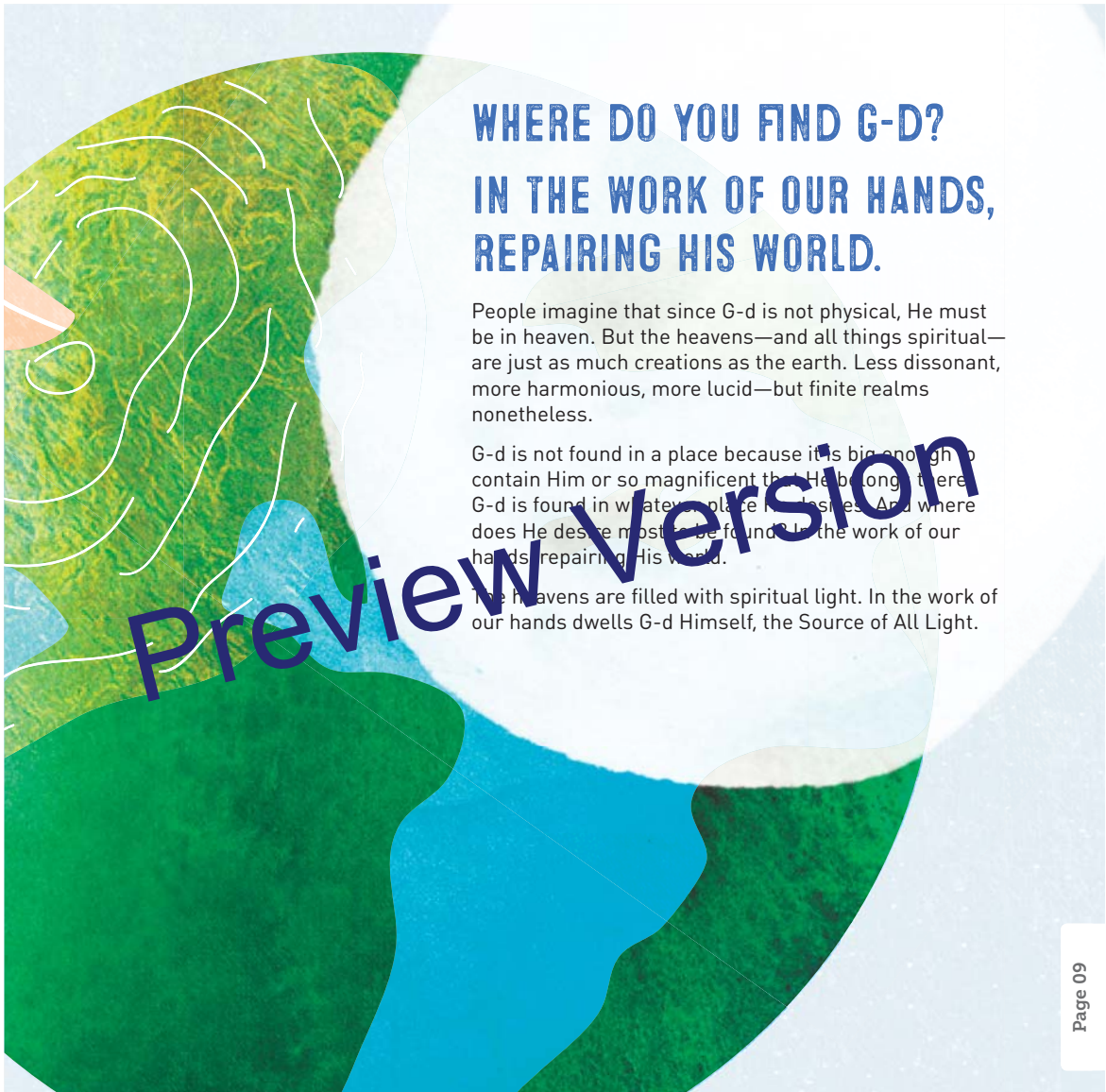
This paragraph tells of our praise to G-d for having chosen us to fix the world as His agents.

Aleinu is a statement of who we are.
We are messengers of light.
We are healers of the cosmos,
assigned the glorious mission of
unveiling the oneness of the
Creator within His creation,
and of bringing harmony to all
nations of the world.
Aleinu is a statement of what it
means to be a Jew,
and of our responsibility to the
entire world.

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After each service and included in the repetition of the Musaf



WHERE DO YOU FIND G-D?

IN THE WORK OF OUR HANDS, REPAIRING HIS WORLD.

People imagine that since G-d is not physical, He must be in heaven. But the heavens—and all things spiritual—are just as much creations as the earth. Less dissonant, more harmonious, more lucid—but finite realms nonetheless.

G-d is not found in a place because it is big enough to contain Him or so magnificent that He belongs there. G-d is found in whatever place He chooses. And where does He desire most to be found? In the work of our hands, repairing His world.

The heavens are filled with spiritual light. In the work of our hands dwells G-d Himself, the Source of All Light.

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Lekeil Orech Din
לא-ל עורך דין

In this poem, each letter of the Hebrew alphabet describes G-d's penetrating judgment.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are days of judgment for the entire world.

The entire world is thrown into reboot, and a decision must be made on every detail of its operation.

The life of every creature is determined.

The [illegible] of every day is composed.

All according to what we have done with the year that has passed.

But we are not passive players in that judgment.

We are all lawyers for our fellow Jews, and for all who share our world.

As we plead for them, so are we judged.

126, 222 | 170

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AS YOU MEASURE OTHERS, SO YOU WILL BE MEASURED.

At every moment, your Creator must decide: "How should I measure this little creature, with its imperfections and blunders? How often and by what scale?"

Then He looks at how you measure others. And by that same measure, He measures you.



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Avinu Malkeinu
אבינו מלכנו

We beg our Supernal "Father" and
King" to grant us all the [illegible]

Preview Version

152, 285 | 80, 190, 342, 376



PEER DEEP WITHIN THE AWESOMENESS OF THE CREATOR AND FIND A PERSONAL, LOVING G-D.

Rosh Hashanah, the Baal Shem Tov taught, is a game of hide and seek. G-d hides, we seek. And so the game continues throughout the Days of Awe.

But where can G-d hide? Wherever you go, there He is. As the Zohar says, "There is no place void of Him."

So perhaps what the Baal Shem Tov meant is more like peek-a-boo—when the parent hides behind his or her own fingers. So too, G-d hides Himself within the guise of an awesome, indifferent king, judging His subjects strictly by the book until the most sublime angels shiver in dread.

And we seek. We seek the father behind the stern voice. We are the small child who climbs into the king's arms, tears off the mask and exclaims, "Daddy!"

Which is just what He was waiting for.

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13 Principles of Compassion
י"ג מידות הרחמים

G-d revealed this formula to Moses as a key to unlock the gates of divine forgiveness.

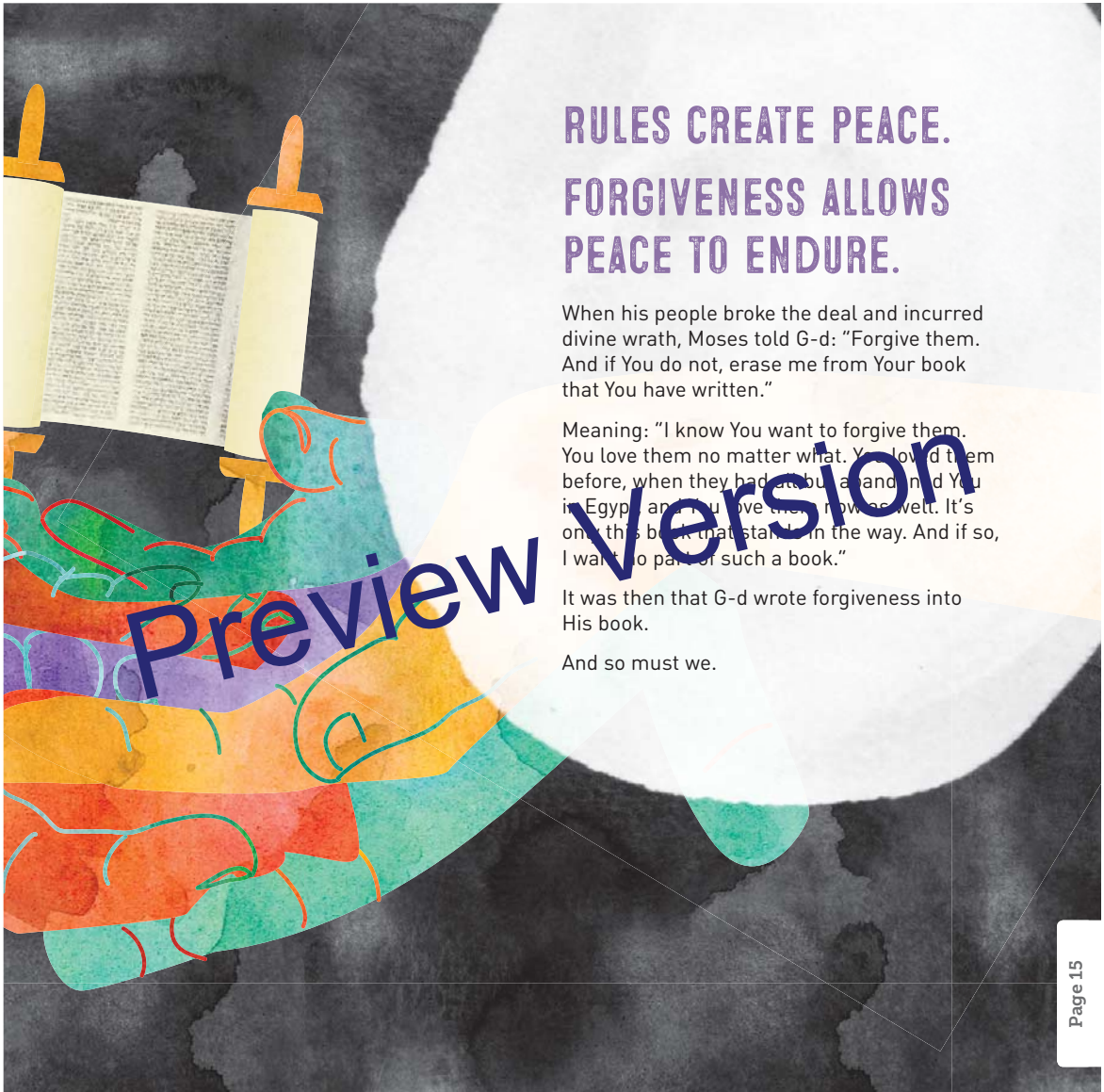
These are the 13 divine qualities of compassion, revealed to Moses after the sin of the golden calf. They are a formula to channel forgiveness and healing into our world.

As we say them, we search to find the same qualities within ourselves. If we can find them there, we can draw them into our world.

When taking out the Torah and during the Selichot prayers



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RULES CREATE PEACE.

FORGIVENESS ALLOWS PEACE TO ENDURE.

When his people broke the deal and incurred divine wrath, Moses told G-d: "Forgive them. And if You do not, erase me from Your book that You have written."

Meaning: "I know You want to forgive them. You love them no matter what. You loved them before, when they had attributed and bound You in Egypt, and You love them now as well. It's only this book that stands in the way. And if so, I want no part of such a book."

It was then that G-d wrote forgiveness into His book.

And so must we.

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Shofar שופר

Hearing the blowing of the shofar is the central mitzvah of Rosh Hashanah.

The sound of the shofar
is not the cry of a human voice.
It is the howl of an animal's horn.

It is a cry so primal, so raw,
that the mind ceases to ponder,
the heart suspends its throb.

With the fury of a beast pent up
in its cage, the naked essence
of the soul bursts out howling,
ripping through heaven's curtains,
awakening the primal essence of
all being.

The raw core of your soul below
touches the primal essence above,
and now their reunion may begin.

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OUR JOB IS TO KEEP THE CREATOR ENGAGED.

DO SOMETHING WONDROUS.

Our job is to keep Him engaged. When the Creator's mind is engaged, our world comes alive. It resonates with His presence.

Miracles happen.

If we lose His interest, He acts as though He is not there, as though He is sleeping. Madness breaks loose.

He needs to see things that interest Him happening down here. Something more than an everyday world going about its everyday stuff. More than the patterns and rhythms of the nature He created. Even angels singing His praises all day can get tedious after a millennium or so.

But an earthly being doing a G-dly act—now that's something to wake up to.

Preview Version

Rosh Hashanah Musaf
מוסף לראש השנה

The Musaf prayer corresponds to the additional sacrifices brought in the Holy Temple on special days.

Look carefully in your machzor at the structure of the Musaf Amidah. You will find three sections, one that speaks of G-d as our king, one that speaks of G-d remembering us, one that speaks of the shofar and its meaning.

G-d is our king, the author of this story in which we play. Yet at times, we break out of the script. The story seems to have been wrecked and the world now an empty page.

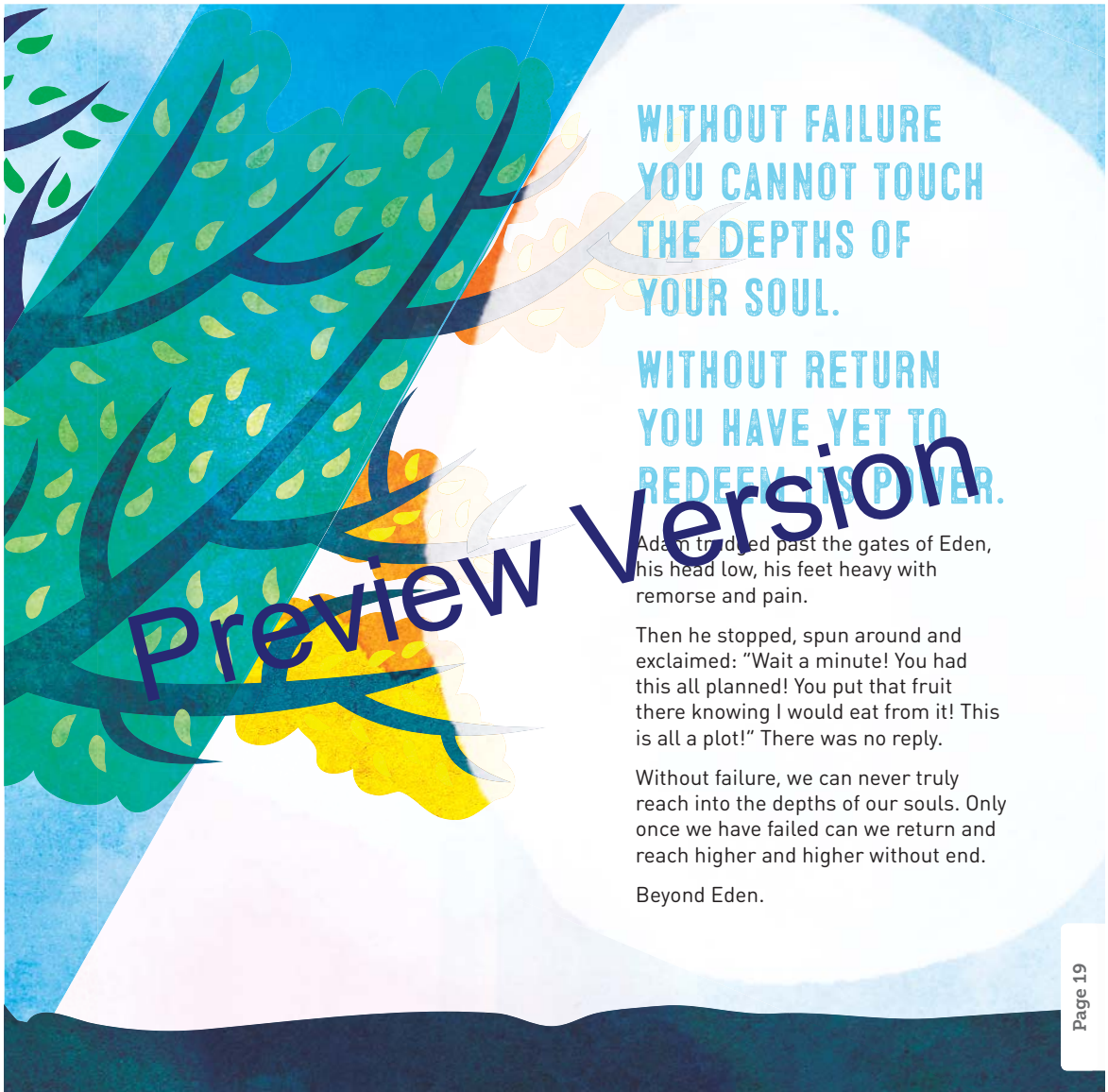
But then we remember. We remember our G-d, and He remembers us.

So we call out to Him from that place deep within, a place where ancient memories are stored, a point within that never left its oneness with G-d. And He responds in kind.

Now the drama becomes deeper. It becomes a love story between the Divine Author and the creatures into which He breathes life from His innermost depths.



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WITHOUT FAILURE
YOU CANNOT TOUCH
THE DEPTHS OF
YOUR SOUL.

WITHOUT RETURN
YOU HAVE YET TO
REDEEM HIS POWER.

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Adam trudged past the gates of Eden, his head low, his feet heavy with remorse and pain.

Then he stopped, spun around and exclaimed: "Wait a minute! You had this all planned! You put that fruit there knowing I would eat from it! This is all a plot!" There was no reply.

Without failure, we can never truly reach into the depths of our souls. Only once we have failed can we return and reach higher and higher without end.

Beyond Eden.

Unetane Tokef
ונתנה תוקף

This haunting prayer tells how all of creation passes before G-d in judgement on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

The angels are G-d's thoughts, shuttling back and forth the energy of creation. They have no bodies as we know bodies. They are creatures of light that return to light.

But we are inhabitants of physical bodies, formed from the wet earth, destined to return to there.

And yet, in this our advantage: The angels have only their message to carry—they can do no more. But in the short years given to each one of us, we are capable of changing ourselves, molding our own lives and transforming our world.

We are souls inhabiting a physical world. We connect and bond heaven and earth. Indeed, we transcend both.

200, 223 | 238

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KNOW YOU ARE NOT AN ANGEL.
KNOW YOU ARE NOT A BEAST.
KNOW YOU ARE HUMAN.

You need to decide what you are.

If you believe you are an angel, prepare for disappointment.

If you think of yourself as a beast, you may well become depressed.

Best to know you are human. Stay away from situations you can't handle, and face up to the mess when you fall down.

That's even higher than the angels.

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Vechol Maaminim
וכל מאמינים

Following the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, we tell how all believe in G-d's primacy, honesty and judgment.

Preview Version



203, 226 241



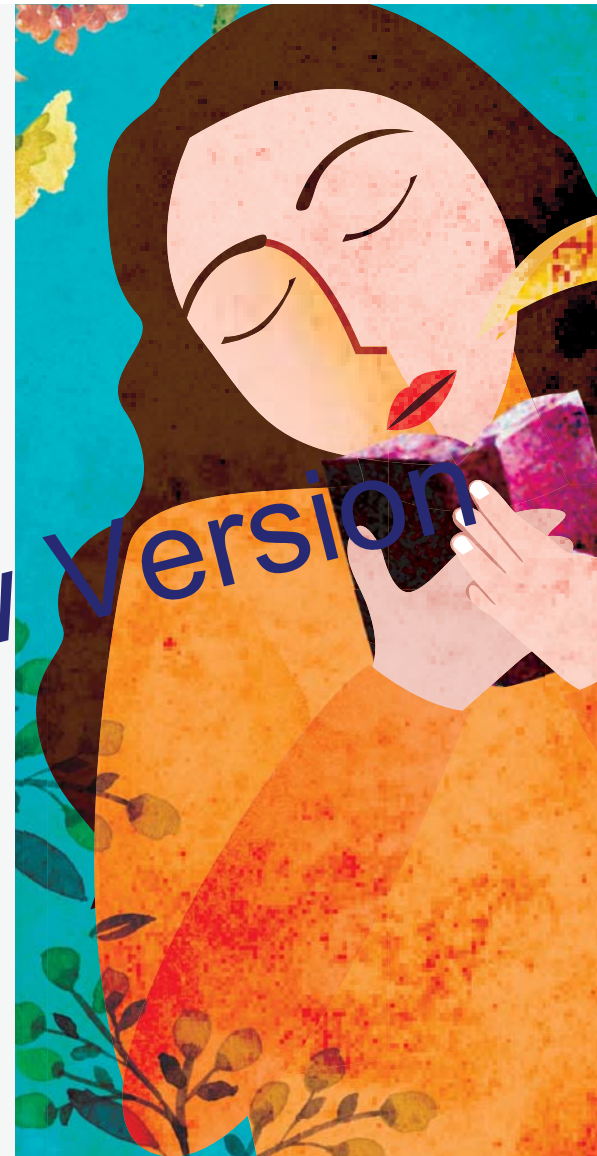
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Ashamnu אשמנו

Following the rhythm of the Hebrew Alphabet, we list our sins, one for each of the 22 letters.

Preview Version

Said at the end of the silent *Amidah* and then again following the repetition of the *Amidah*.





ALL THE WORLD, OVER ALL OF TIME, IS CREATED BY A SONG.

The first word of the Torah can be read that way: It says, "In the beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth." The first word is **בראשית**. Change those letters around and it reads **שיר א ב**—meaning, "The song of alef bet." The entire universe is created by a song using the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

When you live a life in harmony with that song, as the Torah tells us, the song resonates and is amplified through you.

But when a person's life is in dissonance with that song, that brings discordance and cacophony to ring throughout the world.

That is why, when we return to the Creator, we say this prayer whose words are ordered in the order of the alef-bet: With these words we are repairing that song and returning it to its harmony, the song that creates the world.

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Kol Nidrei כל נדרי

In the presence of Torah scrolls, all vows are declared null and void.

At the threshold of the most sublime day of the year, the day of At-one-ment, we release all vows.

We release ourselves from all that ties us down. All the cells into which we have locked ourselves, all the chains with which we have defined ourselves, all the knots and clefts that have severed us from knowing who we really are.

And now we are prepared for forgiveness. Because who we are today is not who we were yesterday.

Preview Version

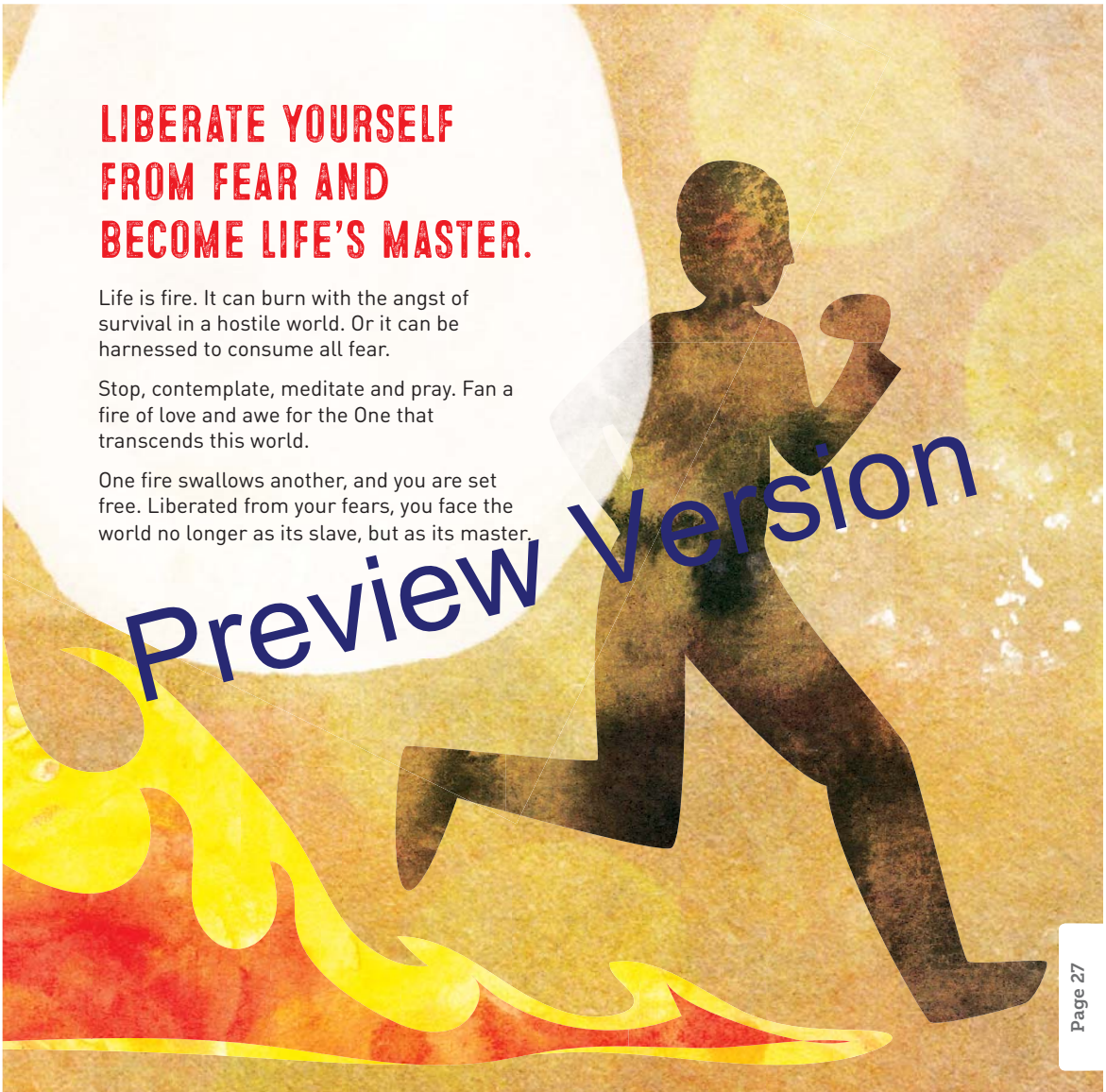


LIBERATE YOURSELF FROM FEAR AND BECOME LIFE'S MASTER.

Life is fire. It can burn with the angst of survival in a hostile world. Or it can be harnessed to consume all fear.

Stop, contemplate, meditate and pray. Fan a fire of love and awe for the One that transcends this world.

One fire swallows another, and you are set free. Liberated from your fears, you face the world no longer as its slave, but as its master.



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Ki Anu Amecha
כי אנו עמיך

This is prose of pure love and devotion. As a child and a parent, as a people and their king, as a flock and their shepherd, as every relationship that bonds two to make one so is our relationship with G-d—yet in unity more intense. The closing stanza's note that even as we sin, G-d remains forgiving and our bond eternal.

Preview Version



71, 178, 273, 331, 370



WHEN DOES A RELATIONSHIP BECOME REAL?

ONLY ONCE IT HAS BROKEN DOWN AND BEGINS TO HEAL.

As long as each perfectly fulfills the other's expectations, there is no relationship, only a contract and its transactions. But once trust is breached, a new depth must enter: The depth of the other.

If there is truly a relationship—if it is the essence of the other that matters more than the benefits of the transactions—then there is a search for forgiveness, for return, and for healing.

So it was that within forty days of entering into a contract with the One Above, the children of Israel broke the deal. And so it was that through forgiveness, return and healing, the soul below and the One Above discovered they could not part from one another.

For our souls and G-d are a single whole.

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Al Cheit על חטא

The Al Cheit is an enumeration of sins and a request for forgiveness.

The greatest obstacle to change is the blame-game. And the first key to self-transformation is the ability to stare your mistakes in the face and take responsibility for each one of them.

Once we are able to face up to ourselves, only then can we say "If I can mess up like a bad cartoonist I have the ability to mend it. And even to carry it higher."

Preview Version



Said at the end of the silent *Amidah* and then again following the repetition of the *Amidah*.



YOU DON'T NEED A TIME MACHINE TO CHANGE YOUR PAST.

YOU JUST NEED TO CHANGE THE DIRECTION IT IS SENDING YOU.

To change the past, there is no need to travel in a time machine. Everything can be done by remote control.

Here's how it works: From beyond the continuum of time, its Creator looks at where your spaceship is heading right now. From that point, He creates all its trajectory—through the future and through the past.

Switch the direction your past is sending you. Soon enough, it becomes a different past.

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Yom Kippur Morning Torah Reading:

The Azazel Goat

On Yom Kippur morning, we read about the Yom Kippur service performed by the High Priest in the Holy Temple. A central part of this service was the lottery performed over two goats, one of whom would be sacrificed within the Temple while the other was sent to the wilderness, to azazel.

We've all got a goat inside, half good, half crazy.

On the one hand, you can't live without it, and it's not at all bad. Maybe it's like one of those nice goats that provides milk, wool and playfulness. On the other hand, it can get into some darned awful habits that can prove pretty embarrassing in your relationship with others. Even more embarrassing when it comes to your Creator.

So, you need to split that goat in two goats. And then send one of them away.

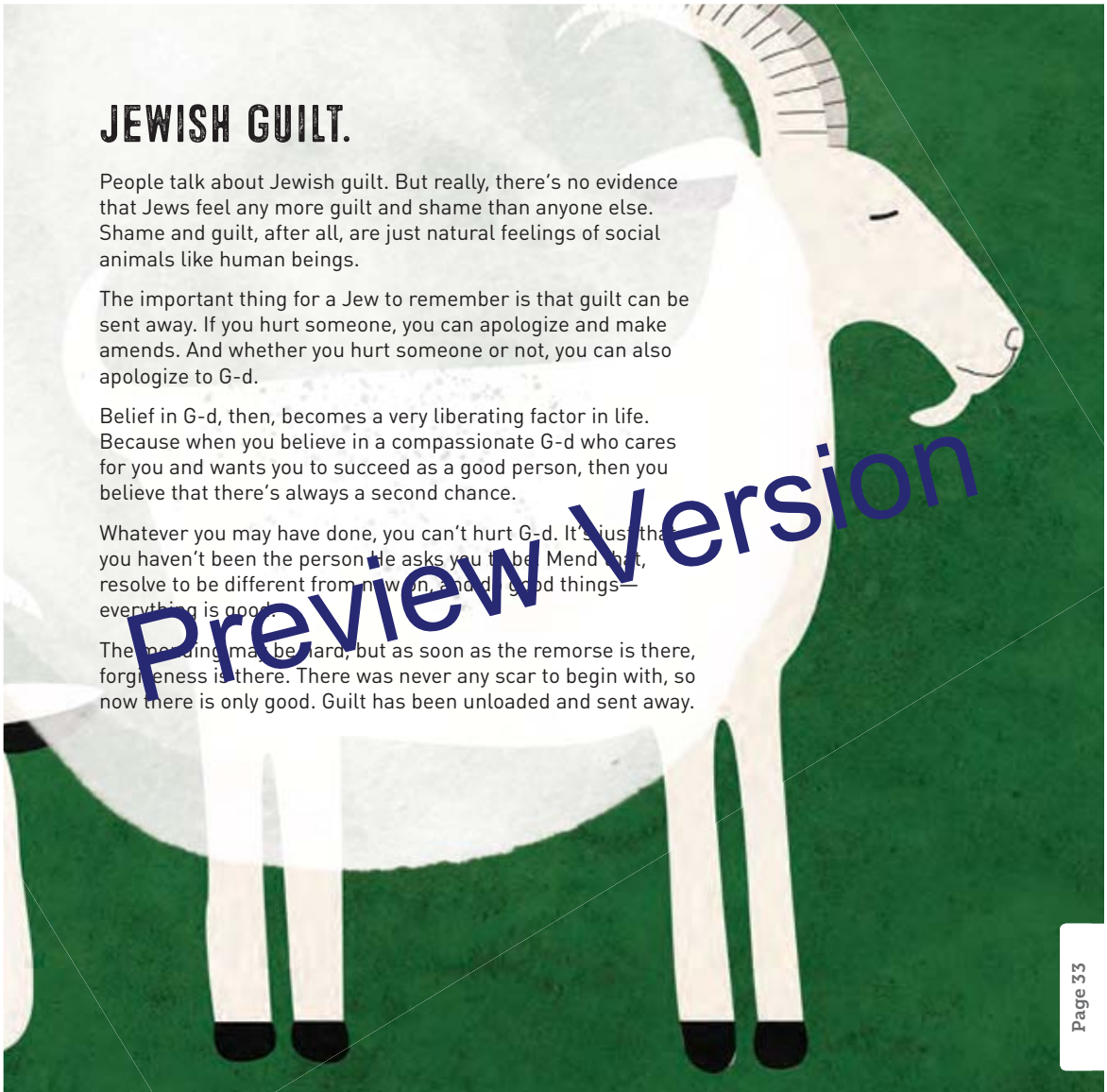
There's a caveat here, something you really have to know: You can't send a goat away unless you first take ownership of it. You have to say, "This is my goat. It's part of me. What it did, I did. I take full responsibility."

Once you've done that, you can wave goodbye, close the door, and resolve never to let it back in again. Then get to work on raising up the other goat into a truly divine offering.

Of course, somehow he manages to sneak back in, each year. So here we go again.

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JEWISH GUILT.

People talk about Jewish guilt. But really, there's no evidence that Jews feel any more guilt and shame than anyone else. Shame and guilt, after all, are just natural feelings of social animals like human beings.

The important thing for a Jew to remember is that guilt can be sent away. If you hurt someone, you can apologize and make amends. And whether you hurt someone or not, you can also apologize to G-d.

Belief in G-d, then, becomes a very liberating factor in life. Because when you believe in a compassionate G-d who cares for you and wants you to succeed as a good person, then you believe that there's always a second chance.

Whatever you may have done, you can't hurt G-d. It's just that you haven't been the person He asks you to be. Mend that, resolve to be different from now on, and do good things—everything is good.

The mending may be hard, but as soon as the remorse is there, forgiveness is there. There was never any scar to begin with, so now there is only good. Guilt has been unloaded and sent away.

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Avodah עבודה

During the repetition of the Yom Kippur Musaf, we tell of the Yom Kippur service performed by the High Priest in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

The service in the Temple in Jerusalem was a spiritual one. Yes, there was meat burning on the altar, blood sprinkled on the curtain of the Holy of Holies.

But there were also Levites singing heavenly song, the aroma of incense filling the air. Because in that animal, each person saw himself burning up. He saw how the animal within himself could truly become divine.



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WE ALL HAVE AN ANIMAL TO BRING TO THE ALTAR.

We all have a beast inside. The point is not simply to muzzle that animal, but to harness its power. But first you have to determine what sort of an animal this is and what can be done with it.

A sheep, for example, doesn't care to hurt anyone. An ox, on the other hand, can kick and gore.

But did you ever see a sheep plow a field?

Preview Version

Shema Koleinu
שמע קולנו

The ark is opened and we ask G-d to hear our supplications.

It is noble to admit to faults. It's noble to produce, but more than that. In the sechot, we have the courage to proclaim our weakness. And that is what allows us to become great.

Preview Version



70, 177, 272, 330

THE POWER OF RETURN IS TO LEAP BEYOND ANY BOUNDS.

Night comes before day, pain before pleasure, confusion before wisdom. So, too, the way this world was made, there is no journey forward without first a step backward.

So it is with all creatures. But we human beings, we strive not only to move forward, but to leap beyond our own nature, beyond any nature at all.

We, too, must first step back before we can leap upward. But since our leap is beyond nature, we fall, too, beneath our nature.

That is sin—a fall beneath your own nature, as one who crouches before he leaps.

And that is the power of return.
—to leap beyond any bounds at all.

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Ne'ilah נעילה

On Yom Kippur, a fifth prayer—the closing prayer—is said in the waning hours of this most sacred day.

The gates of heaven are locked, but we are inside, in embrace with our Beloved.

The Neilah service is the moment to which all the Ten Days of Awe have been carrying us. Now is the time to experience the most intimate oneness with our G-d. Now, we must only allow ourselves to be open to His infinite love.

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Shema Yisrael
שמע ישראל

Just before the close of Yom Kippur, we all repeat loudly after the cantor the opening words of the Shema Yisrael that a Jew says every morning and every evening:

Shema Yisrael, Ado-nai Elo-heinu, Ado-nai Echad.

Hear O Israel, G-d is our G-d, G-d is One.

We then repeat three times the second line of the Shema:

Baruch Shem K'vod Malchuto L'olam Va'ed.

Blessed be the name of His glory forever and ever.

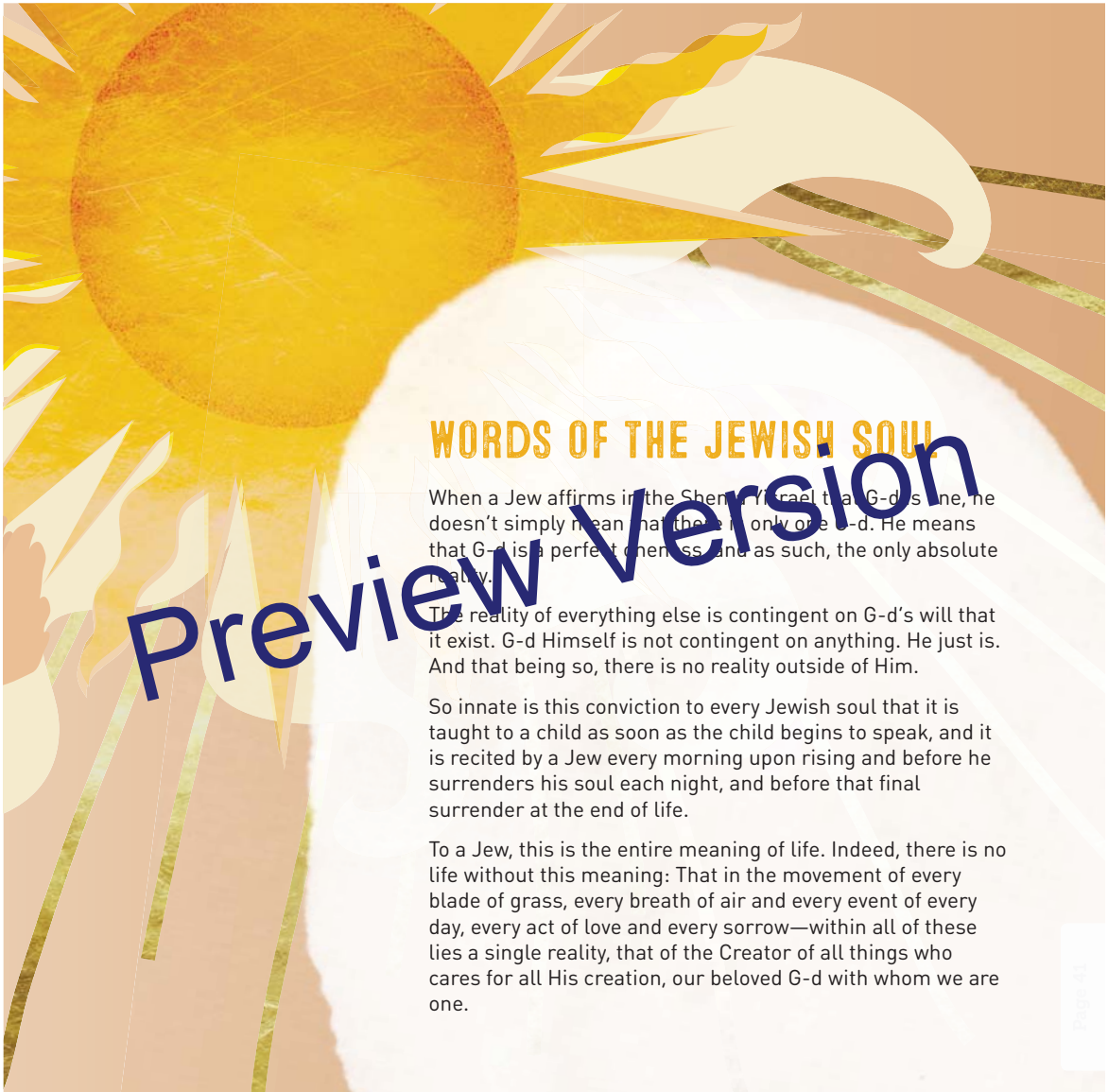
And finally, we repeat seven times:

Ado-nai Hu Ha-Elo-him
Ado-nai is the true G-d

After this, kaddish is recited, and in the middle of kaddish, the shofar is blown to mark the end of the fast. After the evening prayer, we wish each other "A good Yom Tov" and return to our homes for a festive meal.



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WORDS OF THE JEWISH SOUL

When a Jew affirms in the Shema Yisrael that G-d is one, he doesn't simply mean that there is only one G-d. He means that G-d is a perfect oneness and as such, the only absolute reality.

The reality of everything else is contingent on G-d's will that it exist. G-d Himself is not contingent on anything. He just is. And that being so, there is no reality outside of Him.

So innate is this conviction to every Jewish soul that it is taught to a child as soon as the child begins to speak, and it is recited by a Jew every morning upon rising and before he surrenders his soul each night, and before that final surrender at the end of life.

To a Jew, this is the entire meaning of life. Indeed, there is no life without this meaning: That in the movement of every blade of grass, every breath of air and every event of every day, every act of love and every sorrow—within all of these lies a single reality, that of the Creator of all things who cares for all His creation, our beloved G-d with whom we are one.

Preview Version

Leshanah Haba'ah
לשנה הבאה

We conclude the High Holidays with our prayerful wishes that next year, we celebrate in Jerusalem.

The drama is not over. It has only begun. We have all been lifted high, showered with divine love, swallowed within our Creator's embrace.

We have been empowered.

Empowered to change the world.

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Ten Mitzvahs to Choose From

Looking for a New Year's resolution? One that's not too hard, but will really change your life?

Here's a list of 10 mitzvahs, hand-picked by the Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory. Start with one. It just takes one deed to change your world.



Tefillin:
Jewish wrap.



Study Torah:
Eternalize your mind.



Tzedakah:
A coin a day keeps the world spinnin' 'round.



Jewish Education:
Invest in futures.



Shabbat Candles:
This little girl's gonna light up the world!



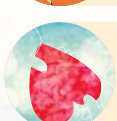
A House Full of Torah Books:
Create a lofty environment.



Mezuzah:
The ultimate in home-security systems.



Kosher Food:
For spiritual fitness.



Love Your Fellow Jew:
Because we're all one.



The Mikvah:
Purifying waters.

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For more information on any of these mitzvahs, visit chabad.org/mitzvah.

Chabad.ORG

SEE YOU AGAIN SOON!

Preview Version

We know, it's a small portion, and there's so much more to say. But we hope these few words helped make the services more meaningful for you. We certainly enjoyed having you here—after all, every person contributes something unique and special to the experience.

As for the journey, that's only just begun. These are days that inspire and uplift us. Now it's our job to take their energy and make it shine throughout our lives.

How do we do that? We take a souvenir from these days. Something small, something we can commit to, something we know we can get done.

For one thing, If you like what you experienced here, keep coming back. We have plenty of events, lectures, classes and social activities you'll enjoy in a friendly, warm community atmosphere.

Whatever it is, don't be a stranger. Consider our place to be your place, and a place for everyone in the community.