

jewbelong **HIGH HOLIDAYS!**

SHORTER BUT STILL SWEET

Think of these readings as a shortcut to the heart of the High Holidays. Allow them to help you reflect, reset, and feel something real. May this new year bring you sweetness, strength, and a little more peace!

THE BEGINNING OF THE JOURNEY

Adapted from Mayyim Hayyim

May I begin this year fresh and open to the possibility of transformation.
Though the future is uncertain, I release this past year with all its difficulties and joys.
I open my heart to receive the blessings of the New Year.

May I return to my true self and be strengthened as I continue my journey of tikkun halev — repairing the heart, tikkun hanefesh — repairing the soul, and tikkun olam —repairing the world.

TEACHING YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT GOD

Rabbi David J. Wolpe

A woman once stood before God, her heart breaking from the pain and injustice in the world. “Dear God,” she cried out, “look at all the suffering, the anguish, and distress in your world. Why don’t you send help?”

God responded, “I did, I sent you.”

HEENAYNEE

Rabbi Rami M. Shapiro

Here I am. A little bit nervous, a bit self-conscious.
After all, who am I talking to? And what have I done?
Am I a sinner in search of grace or a saint seeking salvation?
Am I so evil or so good as to warrant this season of introspection?

And yet here it is, and here I am:
this time of change and correction, this heart of confusion and contrition.
Oh, if I could change!
If I could be so sure of myself that I no longer had to imagine the slights of others;
to be so loving of myself that I no longer had to ration my loving of others;
to be so bold with myself that I no longer had to fear the bravery of others.

Oh, if I could change there is so much I would change.
Maybe I will, but it scares me so.
Maybe I won't and that should scare me more.
But it doesn't.

So let me pray just this:
Let no one be put to shame because of me.
Wouldn't that make this a wonderful year?
Heenaynee – Here I am!

I HEREBY FORGIVE

Author Unknown

Whoever has hurt me or has done me any wrong
Whether he did it deliberately or by accident
Whether he did it by word or by deed
May no one be punished on my account
May I transgress no more
That I do not revert to my old ways
After that I do not do that which is wicked
Let the wrongdoing that I have committed be wiped away
But not through sickness or suffering
May the words of my mouth
And the prayers that are in my heart
Be my inspirations for the coming year

GET UP!

Adapted from Rabbi Allen S. Maller

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, 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."

THE WORLD DOESN'T NEED MORE PEOPLE BEATING THEMSELVES UP INSIDE

Cristen Rodgers

The world doesn't need more people beating themselves up inside, making a bloody mess of their broken hearts and tattered shreds of their minds. There's quite enough of that and all it brings is more pain. The world needs more beautiful souls like yours who choose to see the beauty in their scars, who dare to forgive, to take their great big hearts and turn them inside out and give themselves the same kind of compassion that they give to others.

WHY FORGIVE?

Johann Christoph Arnold

Forgiveness is a door to peace and happiness. It is a small, narrow door and cannot be entered without stooping. It is also hard to find. But no matter how long the search, it can be found... When we forgive someone for a mistake or a deliberate hurt, we still recognize it as such, but instead of lashing out or biting back; we attempt to see beyond it, so as to restore our relationship with the person responsible for it.

Our forgiveness may not take away our pain – it may not even be acknowledged or accepted – yet the act of offering it will keep us from being sucked into the downward spiral of resentment. It will also guard us against the temptation of taking out our anger or hurt on someone else.

Forgiveness does not mean ignoring what has been done or putting a false label on an evil act; it means, rather, that the evil act no longer remains as a barrier to the relationship. Forgiveness is a catalyst creating the atmosphere necessary for a fresh start and a new beginning.

FORGIVE, FORGIVE, FORGIVE

Author Unknown

If I have harmed anyone in any way either knowingly or unknowingly through my own confusions, I ask their forgiveness. If anyone has harmed me in any way either knowingly or unknowingly through their own confusions, I forgive them. And if there is a situation I am not yet ready to forgive, I forgive myself for that. For all the ways that I harm myself, negate, doubt, belittle myself, judge or be unkind to myself through my own confusions, I forgive myself.

PERSONAL ROAD MAP.

ASK YOURSELF IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Adapted from "Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur Survival Kit"

Rabbi Shimon Apisdorf

The start of the Jewish New Year is a great time for soul-searching, and the Personal Road Map is a perfect starting point. For some of us at JewBelong, it's the most thought-provoking part of the holiday. The Personal Road Map challenges us to consider the past year and think about how we'd like to move our lives forward. You don't have to answer every question, but tackling a few is impactful. It can even be transformative, especially when shared with a group.

1. When do I feel that my life is most meaningful?
2. What would bring me more happiness than anything else in the world?
3. What are my three most significant achievements in the past year?
4. What are my biggest mistakes in the past year?
5. What project or goal, if left undone, will I most regret a year from now?
6. If I knew I couldn't fail, what would I try to accomplish?
7. What is the most important decision I need to make this year?
8. What important decision did I avoid making last year?
9. Over the last year, did my most important relationships become closer and deeper, or was there a sense of stagnation and drifting?
10. What can I do to nurture those relationships this year?
11. If I could change one thing about myself, what would it be?
12. Are there any ideals I'd be willing to die for?
13. If I could live my life over, what would I change?
14. What do I want written on my tombstone? And how do I begin living that way now?

BLESSING FOR ANYONE WHO ISN'T JEWISH **(Cause we know this is a lot)**

Inspired by Rabbi Janet Marder

May everyone who shares in a Jewish life feel welcome and integrated. We lovingly acknowledge the diversity of our community and are deeply grateful for the love and support you provide by opening your heart to Judaism, no matter how big or small a part it is in your day. Your presence at this Jewish experience is valued. It is not taken for granted because not everyone in this broken world will sit at a Shabbat dinner or attend a Passover Seder. We are a very small people, and history has made us smaller. As we once again see a rise in hatred and hear fear in the voices of our community, we are grateful for your presence. We pray with all our hearts that all you give to the Jewish people will come back to you and fill your life with joy. Amen.



FOR THE SIN WE COMMITTED

[Call and Response]

Adapted from Rabbi Dov Peretz Elkins

For the sin we committed by not serving our community.

And for the sin we committed by serving our community and neglecting ourselves and our families.

For the sin we committed by chasing after material possessions.

And for the sin we committed by thinking we are unworthy of owning nice things.

For the sin we committed by saving the world and ignoring our own people.

And for the sin we committed by saving Jews and ignoring the rest of the world.

For the sin we committed by being too busy for our children.

And for the sin we committed by indulging our children.

For the sin we committed by ignoring the past.

And for the sin we committed by living only in the past.

For the sin we committed by being selfish.

And for the sin we committed by not loving ourselves and not caring enough for ourselves.



FOR THE MITZVAH

[Call and Response]

Author Unknown

We spend a great deal of time at Rosh Hashanah thinking about mistakes that we have made in the past year. The following reading has us recall some of the deeds we have done that make us proud:

For the mitzvah we have done when we held back a sharp and critical tongue.

For the mitzvah we have done when we gave a compliment and a hug.

For the mitzvah we have done when we gave charity to causes that needed our help.

For the mitzvah we have done when we helped strangers or friends in need.

For the mitzvah we have done for giving unconditional love.

For the mitzvah we have done when we put the needs of the community ahead of our individual needs.

For the mitzvah we have done when we thought well of ourselves in situations where we used to shame ourselves.

For the mitzvah we have done when we give loving attention to children.

For the mitzvah we have done when we took action for the sake of tikkun olam, the repair of the world.

For the mitzvah we have done when we opened our homes in hospitality to guests.

For the mitzvah we have done when we chose not to use products which harm the environment.

For the mitzvah we have done when we took action in the face of hopelessness.

For the mitzvah we have done when we acted or spoke out in the face of racism, sexism, and homophobia – and acted as an ally to those who face discrimination.

For the mitzvah we have done when we resisted addictive use of alcohol, drugs, food, or sex and instead acted in loving and responsible ways towards our bodies.

Looking for more? JewBelong's full High Holidays booklet ([on JewBelong.org](https://www.jewbelong.org)) has the traditional blessings, an intro to tashlich (a beautiful ritual for starting the new year with a clean slate), original songs that'll make you smile, and more!