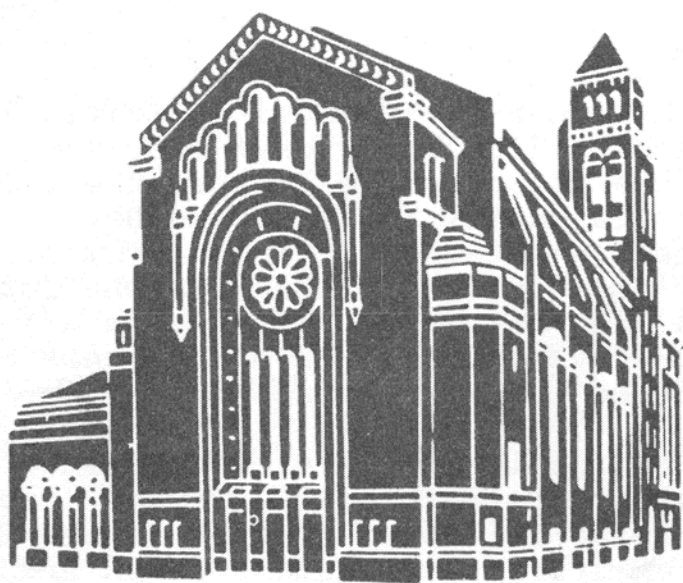


**Congregation Emanu-El
of the City of New York**



סְלִיחֹת

A Service of Selichot

סליחות

SELICHOT

A SERVICE OF PENITENCE

The word *selichah* means “forgiveness”; it also indicates a liturgical poem (in Hebrew: *piyyut*) whose subject is a plea for forgiveness of sins. The Hebrew plural of *selichah* is *selichot*, which describes a service of penitential prayers that are recited on all fast days, periods of special intercession, and during the penitential season which begins before Rosh Hashanah and concludes with Yom Kippur.

The Sephardic community recites *Selichot* for forty days from the first of *Elul* (the month before *Tishrei*, the beginning of the Jewish New Year) to Yom Kippur. The Ashkenazic community begins reciting the prayers late Saturday night at least four days before Rosh Hashanah.

Originally the service consisted of several groups of biblical verses, each culminating in the recitation of the Lord’s thirteen attributes enumerated in Exodus 34:6-7. In geonic times (the sixth to the twelfth century), *Selichot* was expanded and enriched with the inclusion of penitential prayers written by liturgical poets (in Hebrew: *payyotanim*).

Today the liturgy and music of the *Selichot* service instill a mood of solemnity which serves as a prelude to the sacred themes of the Holy Day season.

CANTOR AND CHOIR

Opening Hymn

READER:

“I consider the days of old, I remember the years long ago. I commune with my heart in the night; I meditate and search my spirit: Will the Lord spurn for ever, and never again be favorable?” (Psalm 77:6-8)

Through this hour of worship, we stand at the threshold of the High Holy Days. With suppliant hand we knock upon the door of Divine forgiveness and acceptance, begging entrance.

Help us at this hour, O God, to prepare our spirits for the Days of Awe to come. Give us the courage to see ourselves as we truly are, making no excuse for our shortcomings nor justifying our failings. May we confess, in honesty of spirit, where we have fallen short, where we have done less than we might have done, where we have neglected duty and withheld strength from our responsibilities.

Be with us, O Lord, as we call upon Thee. Hearken to our voice and to the prayers we utter in sincerity and in truth. Renew and strengthen us; and may Thy lovingkindness be our portion.

Thou who art merciful and gracious, transform our arrogance into humility, our selfishness into compassion, our weakness into strength.

Receive us, the penitents, in Thy mercy, O God of mercy.

READER AND CONGREGATION:

“At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee.” Receive us in Thy mercy, O God of mercy.

READER:

Midnight is its own master, owned neither by yesterday nor possessed by tomorrow. It is a moment apart, hung between the hours which are finished and those about to be born. It is a quietness, fixed for an instant on the lance of time. It is the wedding of yesterday’s memory to tomorrow’s hope. It is the question of the concerned heart. What will the New Year bring? How strong will we be to meet its challenges? How courageous in the face of evil? How steadfast when the light of faith is obscured and we must walk in the darkness of despair? How will it be for us, O Lord, how will it be in the New Year?

CANTOR AND CHOIR

Hymn

Responsive Reading
(Psalm 51, upon King David’s sin)

READER:

A psalm of David. Be gracious unto me, O God, according to Thy mercy; according to the multitude of Thy compassions blot out my transgressions.

CONGREGATION:

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in Thy sight,

So that Thou art justified in Thy sentence and blameless in Thy judgment.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Fashion a pure heart for me, O God; create in me a steadfast spirit.

Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners will return to Thee.

O Lord, open Thou my lips; and my mouth shall declare Thy praise.

For Thou hast no delight in sacrifice; were I to give a burnt offering, Thou wouldst not be pleased.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

CANTOR AND CHOIR

יְיָ, יְיָ, אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנוּן, אֲרַךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב חַסֵּד וְאֱמֶת. נִצַּר חַסֵּד

לְאַלְפִים, נִשְׂא עֵוֹן וְפָשַׁע וְחַטָּאתָה, וְנִקְהָה.

Adonai, Adonai, Eil rachum v'chanun,

erech apayim v'rav chesed ve-emet.

Notzer chesed la-alafim, nosei avon vafesha v'chata-ah v'nakei.

The Lord, the Lord God, is merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and ever true; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.

READER AND CONGREGATION:

In this exalted hour we prepare our hearts for the Holy Days soon to come. It will not be in vain if it moves us to search our ways and to ask profound questions. How many were the wasted hours in the year now spent? Did we renew our homes in beauty through thoughtfulness and understanding? Did love speak in eloquence or was the appreciative and the affectionate word left unsaid? Were we a joyful presence to our loved ones or did we take them for granted and so were taken for granted by them? Was there eager companionship with our children or only silence and a distance growing between? How was it with our friends: Were we understanding and helpful? A deed of kindness: Did we perform it or did we keep postponing it until the need for it had withered away? Help us, O Lord, to tell ourselves the truth in these things.

Responsive Reading (Psalm 86)

READER:

A Psalm of David. Incline Thy ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.

CONGREGATION:

Preserve my life, for I am godly; save Thy servant who trusts in Thee.

Be gracious to me, O Lord, for all the day do I cry to Thee.

Gladden the soul of Thy servant, for to Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

For Thou, O Lord, art good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on Thee.

Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; hearken to my cry of supplication.

But Thou, O Lord, art merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Turn to me and take pity on me; give Thy strength to Thy servant, and save the child of Thy handmaid.

CANTOR AND CHOIR

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִשְׁוֵבָה, חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקִדְמוֹת.

Hashiveinu Adonai eilecha v'nashuvah,

chadeish yameinu k'kedem.

Turn Thou us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be restored; renew our days as of old.

READER:

The High Holy Days are the great mountain peaks from whose heights we survey the hills and valleys of our daily life. We see the road of our years winding its way at once through the bright, clear places of our worthiness, and through the dark and tangled jungle of our misdeeds and failures. But these solemn days do more than disclose the record of the past. They hold forth the promise of the future. They bring us the glad tidings that God waits for us. God sets before us the choice of life and death, of good and evil, and pleads with us that we choose life and the good. For God would not see us die.

“Wash you and make you clean,” so admonish the Days of Awe. “Repent, and the God of repentance will forgive.”

Responsive Reading

READER:

Great is repentance,

CONGREGATION:

For it reaches up to the throne of glory.

Great is repentance,

For it brings about redemption.

Great is repentance,

Because of it premeditated sins are accounted only as errors.

Great is repentance,

For it prolongs the years of many.

Great is repentance,

Since for the sake of one individual who repents the whole world is forgiven.

(Talmud Yomah 86a)

CANTOR AND CHOIR

שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ, חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ. וְקַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרַצוֹן אֶת
תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ. הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִשְׁוֹבָה, חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם.
אֵל תִּשְׁלִיכֵנוּ לַעֲת זְקֵנָה, כְּכֹלֹת כְּחֵנוּ אֵל תַּעֲזֹבֵנוּ.

*Sh'ma koleinu, chus v'racheim aleinu. V'kabeil b'rachamim
uv'ratzon et t'filateinu. Hashiveinu Adonai eilecha v'nashuvah,
chadeish yameinu k'kedem. Al tash'licheinu l'eit zik'nah, kich'lot
kocheinu al ta-az'veinu.*

Hear us, hear our voice, O Lord, look graciously upon us; and grant Thy lovingkindness, Thy mercy and forgiveness to us who stand before Thee. Lead us back to Thee, O Lord, in repentance; pardon us, renew our days as of yore. Do not turn Thy face from us, while the years are fleeting and our strength is waning; do not forsake us.

READER:

Our God, and God of our ancestors, each of us calls to Thee from the depths of our own being. Each of us knows our own pain and acknowledges our own sin. Each cries out in our own need. Each of us is alone in our thoughts, each one solitary in our prayers in this hour of *Selichot*.

And yet, we are not alone. Each is part of our people; and so the one becomes the many. The pain of a single individual becomes Israel's pain. The solitary cry finds sanctuary in the heart of Israel, wherever Israel dwells, even unto the ends of the earth.

So each small life merges with the larger life of our people, and we know that we are not alone. A people speaks to us, a faith embraces us, a noble history sustains us, a holy covenant exalts us.

READER:

Help us, O Lord, to be ever grateful:

READER AND CONGREGATION:

*...for our shared destiny,
...for the strength that pours in to fortify our weakness,
...for the courage that centuries of stubborn resistance to evil
have stored up,
...for the fire of hope that is forever rekindled on the ashes of
tyrants' destruction,
...for the soaring trust that Thou art our Keeper and
Preserver, our compassionate Guardian who gives us the
Torah.*

READER AND CONGREGATION:

Let us feel Thy presence, O God. May the spirit of each one who worships here become part of the larger eternal spirit of Thy people Israel. Let the strength of all become the strength of one. Let the trust of one become the trust of all.

Join our spirits together, O Lord, until we become an invincible power against the evil of the world. Join our hands together, O Lord, that we become a mighty instrument for the doing of Thy will. Lift our eyes that all may see Thy vision of one universal humanity, the children of the one universal God. Amen.

(Congregation rises)

CANTOR AND CHOIR

בְּרַחוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ.

Bar'chu et Adonai ha-m'vo-rach.

Praise ye the Lord to whom all praise is due.

בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Ba-ruch Adonai ha-m'vo-rach l'o-lam va-ed.

Praised be the Lord to whom all praise is due forever and ever.

(Congregation is seated)

Responsive Reading

READER:

Accept us in Thy mercy, O Lord our God, and hearken to our prayer.

CONGREGATION:

Bless us with Thy lovingkindness and wipe away our sins.

Conceal not Thy presence from us, do not withhold acceptance of our confession.

Deliver us from those who hate us and let not the enemy triumph over us.

Establish peace in our midst and remove the fear and the threat of war.

Fortify our spirits that we may nobly serve Thee, for we are Thy servants who cleave unto Thy holy word.

Grant favor to Thy faithful ones who love Thee and inspire us to do Thy will.

Hasten the day of our redemption and crown our years with serenity.

Illuminate the world with the light of Thy splendor and drive away the thick darkness.

Joyfully we sing praise to Thy glorious name and exalt Thy majesty with reverent lips.

Ruler of the Universe, unto Thee do we turn in humble confession, and acknowledge our sins before Thee.

Let Thy love sustain us and be gracious unto us. Hear our prayer and our supplication.

Make mercy the foundation of Thy judgment and redemption the foundation stone of Thy decree.

None can stand before Thy justice, for no person is guiltless in Thy sight.

Open to us the gates of forgiveness that we may enter Thy holy courts with singing.

Pardon us for our transgressions and our failings. Thou art bountiful in goodness and in Thy goodness do we trust.

Questioning hearts Thou dost comfort, and Thou sendest balm to their hurt.

Restless spirits Thou dost calm. Peace and serenity are to become our portion.

Speak to us, O Eternal One, and be near us. Answer our penitent cry and deal with us gently.

Turn our hearts to Thee in true repentance and remove from us stubbornness and obstinacy.

Receive us, Thine erring children, in affection. Cast us not away, O Lord, in our iniquity.

Vain and selfish are the goals which we have set before us, and our hands are stained with sin.

Wait for us, O Lord, and be not angry with us for our shortcomings. Show us Thy mercy and absolve us from our unrighteousness.

We yearn to approach Thy throne, O God. We need Thee, Thy strength, Thy light and the courage which is from Thee.

Zealously we give ourselves to Thee, and we acknowledge Thy power and Thy might, Thy glory and Thy majesty on this day and forever more. Amen.

READER:

The High Holy Day season reminds us of the frailty of our lives. In our youth, the years seemed to be an unending procession. Older now, we know that their number is measured and the count of them few.

Help us, O God, to employ our years with meaning. Open our hearts to the needs of others. Let the cup of our life overflow with kindness and generosity. Let us not waste the

time allotted to us by pursuing vain things. Remove from our spirits envy and jealousy, pride in possession, selfishness, and greed. Teach us to bring to every day patience and forbearance, that quiet and serenity may dwell in our hearts and spirits. Amen.

Silent Prayer

CANTOR AND CHOIR

יהו לרצון אמרי פי והגיון לבי לפניך, יי צורי וגואלי.

Yih'yu l'ratzon imrei fi v'hegyon libi l'fanecha, Adonai tzuri v'go-ali.

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable before Thee, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. Amen.

CANTOR AND CHOIR

אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ. אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, חַטָּאוּנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ. אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ,
חַמּוֹל עַלֵינוּ וְעַל-עוֹלָלֵינוּ וְטַפֵּינוּ. אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, כִּלְיָה דְּבַר וְחַרְבַּ וְרָעָב
מֵעַלֵינוּ. אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, כִּלְיָה כָּל צָר וּמִשְׁטִין מֵעַלֵינוּ. אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ,
כְּתַבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר חַיִּים טוֹבִים. אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, חַדֵּשׁ עַלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה.

Ayinu Malkeinu, sh'ma koleinu. Ayinu Malkeinu, chatanu l'fanecha. Ayinu Malkeinu, chamol aleinu v'al olaleinu v'tapeinu. Ayinu Malkeinu, kalei dever v'cherev v'ra-av mei-a-leinu. Ayinu Malkeinu, kalei chol tsar u-mastin mei-a-leinu. Ayinu Malkeinu, kotveinu b'seifer chayim tovim. Ayinu Malkeinu, chadeish aleinu shanah tovah.

Our Father, our King, hear our prayer. Our Father, our King, we have sinned before Thee. Our Father, our King, have mercy upon us and upon our children. Our Father, our King, keep far from our country pestilence, war and famine. Our Father, our King, cause all hate and oppression to vanish from the earth. Our Father, our King, inscribe us for blessing in the book of life. Our Father, our King, grant unto us a year of goodness.

READER:

Let the lights of Repentance, of Prayer and of Righteousness burn bright. May our hearts be brightened, O God, in this hour of *Selichot*, in this hour of petition and of cleansing.

CANTOR AND CHOIR

שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל, שְׁמׁוֹר שְׂאֵרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאַל יֵאָבֵד יִשְׂרָאֵל, הָאוֹמְרִים
שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל. שׁוֹמֵר גּוֹי אֶחָד, שְׁמׁוֹר שְׂאֵרֵי עַם אֶחָד, וְאַל יֵאָבֵד גּוֹי
אֶחָד, הַמְּיַחֲדִים שְׁמֶךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ יי אֶחָד.

Shomeir Yisra-el, sh'mor sh'eirit Yisrael, v'al yovad Yisrael, ha-om'rim sh'ma Yisrael. Shomeir goi echad, sh'mor sh'eirit am echad, v'al yovad goi echad, ham'yachadim shim'cha Adonai eloheinu Adonai echad.

Guardian of Israel, preserve the remnant of Israel; let not Israel perish, we who say: "Hear O Israel." Guardian of this unique people, preserve the remnant of this unique people; let not this unique people perish, we who proclaim Thy Oneness, saying: "The Lord is our God, the Lord is One."

(Congregation rises)

READER:

Guardian of Israel, preserve the remnant of Israel; let not Israel perish, we who say: "Hear O Israel."

Guardian of this unique people, preserve the remnant of this unique people; let not this unique people perish, we who proclaim Thy Oneness, saying: "The Lord is our God, the Lord is One."

CANTOR AND CHOIR

שִׁמְעַי יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֶחָד.

Sh'ma Yis-ra-eil: Adonai E-lo-hei-nu, Adonai e-chad.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Bar-uch sheim k'vod mal-chu-to l'olam va-ed.

Praised be God's name whose glorious kingdom is forever and ever.

(Congregation is seated)

READER AND CONGREGATION:

O Guardian, guard the remnant of this holy people. Let us not perish, this holy people. O Thou who hears all prayers and supplications for mercy, give ear to this afflicted generation, for there is none else to help them.

READER:

Thou who art the source of life, we lift up our spirits to Thee. We seek to open our hearts in truth. We confess our failings, and seek not to hide our trespasses.

Do not forsake us, O Lord. Be near unto us, for we are bereft without Thee. Have mercy upon us and grant us pardon for our sins.

We are frail as dust. The days of our years are as grains of sand that slip through our fingers and we have no power to stay them.

Comfort and sustain us, O Lord. Dark is our world without Thy light, a cavern in which our fears and our failures echo without hope. Do not forsake us. We need Thee.

READER AND CONGREGATION:

O God of life, remember us unto life in the year soon to begin. May it be a year joyous in hope and bright with light, bringing health and gladness in all its days. Be with us in our homes, and may Thy spirit dwell there as a benediction upon us and upon all our dear ones. Amen.

READER:

The generations are bound to one another, and the virtues of the ancestors become the inheritance of the children. We remember the faithful ones, O God, those who were near to us, whose names are on our loving lips, whose lives were intertwined with our own. We remember, too, those who were not known to us and whose lives did not touch our own. But they are ours, even though nameless, the devoted ones who preserved the Torah, who were Thy humble servants, who died in the fiery furnaces of the enemy, so bitter and so unspeakably cruel.

In this moment of recollection, we are joined in spirit with them, grateful for their deeds, their fidelity, their courage under trial, their unfailing faith, their measureless trust in Thee. They guarded the Eternal Light.

We remember them all, our near and beloved ones and the unknown martyrs whom we cannot call by name. They are all with Thee. May it be for peace and quiet and serenity, now and forever more...

MOURNER'S KADDISH

(Mourners rise)

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעֻלְמָא דִּי-בְרָא
כְּרַעוּתֵיהּ, וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתֵיהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב,
וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהִי שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמֵי עֻלְמָא.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא,
וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ
הוּא, לְעַלְמָא מִן-כָּל-בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא, תְּשֻׁבְחָתָא
וְנַחֲמָתָא דְּאִמְרוּן בְּעֻלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהִי שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן-שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עֲלֵינוּ
וְעַל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ
וְעַל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

(Mourners are seated)

Yit'gadal v'yit'kadash sh'mei ra-ba b'alma di-v'ra chir'utei,
v'yamlich mal'chutei b'chayeichon uv'yomeichon uv'chayei
d'chol beit Yis-ra-eil, ba-agala u'viz'man ka-riv, v'im'ru:
A-mein.

Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varakh l'alam ul'almei almay.

Yit'barach v'yish'tabach, v'yit'pa-ar v'yit'romam v'yit'nasei,
v'yit'hadar v'yit'aleh v'yit'halal sh'mei d'kudsha, b'rich hu,
l'eila min kol bir'chata v'shirata, tush'b'chata v'nehchেমmata
da-amiran b'al'ma, v'im'ru: A-mein.

Y'hei sh'lama raba min-sh'maya v'chayim, aleinu v'al kol
Yisra-eil, v'im'ru: A-mein.

Oseh shalom bim'romav, hu ya-aseh shalom aleinu v'al kol
Yisra-eil, v'im'ru: A-mein.

(Mourners are seated)

CANTOR AND CHOIR

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל
כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

*O-seh sha-lom bee-m'ro-mav, hu ya-a-seh sha-lom a-lei-nu v'al
kol Yis-ra-eil, v'eem-ru: A-mein.*

May the One who makes peace on high, bring peace to us and to
all Israel, and let us say: Amen.

BENEDICTION



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