

GATE 1: AMIDAH

Arriving in place. The amidah, a prayer that is typically the apex of a Jewish service, is our entry point today. We embark here in continuity with the ten days of preparation for Yom Kippur.

Experience this as a place to integrate your preparation as you initiate this journey. In typical High Holiday services, the amidah is first recited silently, and then repeated communally. It weaves liturgical verses amidst a sequence of seven blessings, invoking everything from our ancestral lineage, to the temple sacrifice, culminating in a prayer for peace.

Here, the amidah is an opportunity to arrive in place, and tap into the prayers you are bringing with you. For those of you praying outdoors, you can also use this time to acquaint yourself with your minyan of trees.

Zochreinu L'chayim

Excerpt from "Avot" blessing from the Amidah.

זְכוּרֵנוּ לְחַיִּים
zochreinu lachayim

Remember us for life

מֶלֶךְ חַפֵּץ בְּחַיִּים
melech chafetz bachayim

One who rules [the realm of] desiring life

וּכְתִבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים
vechotveinu besefer hachayim

and inscribe us in the Book of Life,

לְמַעַנְךָ אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים
lema'ancha El-him chayim

for Your sake, living Divine Spirit.

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Hineini: הִנְיִי

I AM HERE

While you might have scouted this spot on day 5, it is now time to find a sacred dwelling place where you will center your experience today. Whether you know it or not, there is a patch of earth (or porch, or a corner of your dwelling place) that is calling you. Whether you are in a park, a forest, or your own living room, enter into this meditation and let it guide you.

Place down all that you brought with you and let it rest on the ground. As comfortable, remove your shoes and feel your body directly connected to the earth. Sit or stand as able, close your eyes, and take a few deep breaths through your body. Feel your body evenly connected to the ground- rock from back and forth until you find center, or shift the weight between your sit bones until you evenly meet the ground beneath you. Take a few moments to breathe through your body, from the base of your toes up your legs... through your core, back and neck... up through your head. Notice your breath rise and fall, and allow your body to find its way into connection with the ground beneath it.

Begin to tune into the elements around you. Can you feel any sun on your body? Is there wind brushing by your exposed skin? Are there birds calling or children laughing or horns honking?

As you find yourself center, begin to notice the direction you are being called. Turn towards. Open your eyes (or keep them closed if you dare!) Let your body's sense guide you to your dwelling place.

Walk gently towards it, releasing expectations of how you thought you might occupy this space today. Feel yourself arrive. Re-center with some deep breaths through your body.

Upon arrival, spend time in this heightened state of awareness. Engage each sense to truly behold where you've landed this morning. Allow your vision to expand as you take in the angles and layers in your gaze, breathe the fresh air through your whole body; taste it. Feel the earth beneath your body and/or feet. Perhaps you close your eyes, bend down, and feel the surrounding earth. Spend a few minutes with your eyes closed, just listening. Tune into the furthest away sounds, to the tones of your own in and out breath, and everything in between. Sink into presence, feel the weeks leading up to this Yom Kippur and everything it took for you to carve out this time for yourself melt away into the stillness of this moment.

🕊️ What do you need to let go of to arrive today?

🕊️ What is your intention for this time?

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